



WORKING TOGETHER

Toward SchoolPLUS

PARENT AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

HANDBOOK 2002



Saskatchewan
Learning



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- Regina Public School Division
- Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division
- Saskatchewan Rivers School Division
- Saskatchewan Valley School Division
- Saskatoon East School Division
- Saskatoon Public School Division
- Saskatoon West School Division
- St. Angela School
- St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division
- St. Timothy School
- Swift Current School Division
- Willow Bunch School

This document draws on the expertise of many different sources, including schools and school divisions. A full list of references is found in appendix B.

I. Introduction

I. Introduction

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Background

The education community in Saskatchewan has had a keen interest in enhancing partnerships with parents and community for some time. The recommendations of the High School Review in 1993 called upon Government to promote stronger partnerships with parents and community members. In 1997, provincial education organizations, boards of education, schools, school level organizations and the people of Saskatchewan participated in a public discussion process on the issue of involving parents and communities in schools. Participants in that process identified the need for provincial guidelines and principles on parent and community involvement and partnerships.

Government responded to these two reviews with the release of *Parent and Community Partnerships in Education: Policy Framework* in May 1999. The policy framework outlines the benefits of parent and community involvement and partnerships, and sets out provincial policy vision, principles and goals. In addition, it describes the scope of parent and community partnership activities and responsibilities along a continuum, representing progressively greater levels of collaboration, shared responsibility and participation in decision making.

Following the release of the policy framework, provincial education partners expressed a commitment to develop a shared strategy to work toward the vision outlined in the policy framework. The shared development of this handbook, *Working Together Toward School^{PLUS}: Parent and Community Partnerships in Education: Handbook*, was identified as a key piece in that strategy.

Further to the efforts undertaken by the provincial partners in education, in February 2002, the Government of Saskatchewan released *Securing Saskatchewan's Future – Ensuring the Wellbeing and Educational Success of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth: Provincial Response, Role of the School Task Force Final Report*.

The term "school, family, and community partnerships" is a better, broader term than "parent involvement" to express the shared interests, responsibilities, investments, and the overlapping influences of family, school and community for the education and development of the children they share across the school years.

(Epstein, 1994a)

In its response, Government has defined schools to have two functions:

- to educate children and youth; and,
- to support service delivery.

Strong parent and community partnerships are identified as a critical component as schools move toward the vision of School^{PLUS}. This handbook will be helpful to schools and school divisions as they seek to enhance their capacity to become open and welcoming, reaching out to and creating strong partnerships with parents and communities.

Throughout the policy framework and this handbook, the term "parent" is used to refer to a child's significant caregiver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, foster parent or special or legal guardian.

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is designed for trustees, administrators, school staff and school level organizations interested in engaging in partnerships with parents and community members.

The handbook may be used as a starting point to lead discussions and encourage actions to support parent and community involvement and partnerships in your school or school division. To this end, it provides information, ideas and suggestions, discussion starters, assessment tools and materials for distribution to a variety of audiences. Where possible, Saskatchewan examples have been provided.

You may already have incorporated many of these suggestions in your school, organization or school division. If that is the case, this document may be helpful to you as you revisit your existing processes, programs and policies.

How to use this Handbook

This handbook includes the following sections:

- Introductory Section;
- Suggestions for Schools;
- Suggestions for Boards of Education and School Division Administration;
- Materials and Resources; and,
- Appendices.

References to other resources, such as books, manuals and websites, are also provided in each section.

The *Suggestions* sections are filled with tips and ideas and provide specific information about the roles that schools, boards and administrators play in supporting parent and community involvement and partnerships.

The *Materials and Resources* section includes *ready to use* handouts and workshop plans for use with a variety of target groups. You may wish to copy certain pages or sections and distribute them directly to board members, school staff, parents or community members. The *Appendices* section provides definitions of terms used and a list of references consulted during the preparation of this handbook.

Continuum of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships

There are many ways that parents and community members can become partners in education. The type of involvement and partnership will vary from one school division to another and from school to school, depending on local needs and circumstances. Involvement and partnerships range from activities in the home and community in support of students and learning, to participation in education planning, problem solving and governance.

Each type of involvement and partnership is valued and important. Involvement at all levels contributes to the goal of shared ownership for the education and wellbeing of students.

The following continuum is a key component of the policy framework outlined in *Parent and Community Partnerships in Education: Policy Framework* (1999) and contributes to a broad understanding of the scope of partnership activities and responsibilities. The categories of activity outlined in the continuum represent progressively greater levels of collaboration, shared responsibility and participation in decision making. All categories of involvement and partnership are important and valued and each builds upon the other.

This continuum provides the structure for the section *Suggestions for Schools*, which includes tips and ideas relevant to each level of the continuum. As such, you may wish to familiarize yourself with this continuum and its components. It may also help you to convey the breadth and scope of involvement to others.

Effective parent and community involvement and partnerships are qualitatively different than a single program or activity. They require a committed perspective that permeates all activities in the school and school division. The overall attitude and culture is welcoming and inclusive.

(Saskatchewan Education, 1999)

The categories of the continuum include:

1. *Meeting Basic Needs*

The majority of parents provide supports and create an environment in the home that meets their children's basic needs for health, safety, nurturing, nutrition and housing. Communities contribute to the development of safe, stable and supporting environments for young people.

2. *Developing Openness and Two-Way Communication*

Effective two-way communication between the school and its families and community is the foundation upon which all other types of parent and community involvement and partnership are based. Effective communication ensures that family and community members feel welcome in the school and encouraged to participate in school activities. It also permits information sharing about children's needs and development, and about programs and issues in the school.

3. *Supporting Learning at Home and in the Community*

Parents and communities work to create an environment that supports learning. Families motivate learning by setting a positive example, providing encouragement and engaging in discussion that promotes self-discipline and positive values. Community agencies and individuals recognize and respect the needs and contributions of young people, and contribute to their wellbeing by supporting education as preparation for adult life.

4. *Participating in Voluntary and Advisory Roles*

Parents and community members become involved in the life of the school by supporting and participating in school events, volunteering at the school, and by providing advice on school programs, priorities, supports to learning and policies. Volunteer opportunities may include fundraising, tutoring students, assisting in the library, guest speaking, or participating in extra-curricular program development.

5. *Building Collaboration and Partnerships*

Collaborative efforts and partnerships are developed with parents and the community to strengthen and enhance school programs and to coordinate the range of services required by students and their families.

6. *Participating in Governance*

Formal structures are established to enable parents and community members to participate in school planning and problem solving in advisory or governance roles. These roles are supported by leadership development and training.

The following page illustrates the continuum of parent and community involvement and partnerships with schools described above.

Continuum of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships

All forms of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships are important and valued. Each builds upon the other.

	Meeting Basic Needs	Developing Openness and Two-Way Communication	Supporting Learning at Home and in the Community	Participating in Voluntary and Advisory Roles	Building Collaboration and Partnerships	Participating in Governance
Examples Of Activities And Programs	At home... • safe, caring home environment • adequate food, clothing, rest and shelter In school/community... • nutrition programs • clothing exchanges • "safe rooms" • parenting education • community kitchens • home-school liaison	At home... • advising teacher of students' likes and dislikes, changes to routine, etc. • discussing concerns and successes with the teacher • reviewing information sent home from school • attending meetings and school events In school/community... • welcoming school environment • parent/student/teacher conferences • school newsletters • home visits • surveys of parent opinion • message board • advertising school events and activities • newspaper columns	At home... • being interested in and encouraging children's learning • creating a place to study/work • reading to children • learning about curriculum • making learning part of everyday life - baking, driving, shopping, etc. In the community... • mentoring • creating safe, stable communities In the school... • family literacy programs • assignments that encourage parent/family involvement • learning contracts among parents, teachers and students • summer/holiday learning projects	• attending/assisting with school events • fundraising • volunteering - classroom, field trip, library, lunchroom, etc. • room for volunteers/parents • storytelling/guest speakers • tutoring students • newsletter coordination • leading clubs - drama, gardening, photography, computers, etc. • parent centres • providing advice on school issues/programs • advising on policy issues - school code of conduct, student discipline, curriculum, program adaptations, schedules, etc.	• financial and "in kind" contributions • business partnerships and sponsorships • integrated services • community development • youth community service/work experience • in-school daycare • early intervention • preschool • shared facilities • adopt-a-school	• planning, problem solving • making decisions about: budget • program adaptations • priorities • criteria for staff and/or staffing • school facilities • training in leadership and decision-making skills • program assessment • shared management of project, program or school • partnerships with Aboriginal peoples, organizations and governments
Structure	• self-help groups • school level organizations - parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association • community association • school-community liaison program	• school-community liaison program • school level organizations - parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association • community association • district board of trustees/conseil d'école	• school-community liaison program • school level organizations - parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association • district board of trustees/conseil d'école • community association	• volunteer programs • school level organizations - parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association • district board of trustees/conseil d'école • community association	• advisory committees • interagency committees • school level organizations - parent/teacher council, school council, home and school association • district board of trustees/conseil d'école	• school councils, parent advisory council, school/community council • district board of trustees/conseil d'école • co-management board • associate schools • board of education/conseil scolaire fransaskois
Increased collaboration with educators, shared responsibility for education, and participation in decision making						

(Adapted from the work of Joyce Epstein)

Understanding Education Governance

In supporting parent and community involvement and partnerships, you may work with a variety of groups. Some groups are legislated or mandated while others are less formal. All have varying roles and responsibilities. In some school divisions, several of these groups may exist. In this case, supporting interaction among groups can be an important role. The following are some of the governance structures and organizations involved in the Saskatchewan education system:

Boards of Education (and the Conseil scolaire fransaskois)

Saskatchewan is divided into 99 school divisions. Each school division is governed by a board of education or conseil scolaire. Boards of education are elected in a public election every three years.

District Boards of Trustees (Local Boards)

In every school division that is divided into school districts (most rural school divisions), each school district is required to have a district board of trustees. Roles, responsibilities and operations are specified in sections 120-134 of *The Education Act, 1995*. The legislation makes provisions for First Nation representation on boards in cases where the First Nation has a tuition fee agreement with the school division.

Conseils d'écoles

Each fransaskois school must have a conseil d'école. Membership, roles, responsibilities and operations are specified in sections 134.1-134.4 of *The Education Act, 1995*.

Local School Advisory Committees

In every school division that is not divided into school districts (usually urban school divisions), at the discretion of the board of education, schools may establish local school advisory committees. Roles, responsibilities and operations are specified in sections 135-140 of *The Education Act, 1995*.

Other Structures

The formation of other local advisory groups requires the support, participation, and cooperation of principals and boards of education. Such advisory groups are not governed by legislation and are organized locally. Examples include: school councils, parent-teacher organizations, parents' associations, parent advisory councils, home and school associations, etc.

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II. Suggestions for Schools

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Parent and Community Partnership Activity Level

Principals and teachers, together with school level organizations, have an important role to play in understanding, encouraging, and supporting parent and community partnerships. By providing leadership and open communication channels, your school can enhance its role as an integral part of family and community life.

Parent and community partnerships are strongly linked to school effectiveness. Research has shown that parent and community participation within schools has numerous benefits for students, parents, teachers, and communities. A detailed list of these benefits appears in Section B-1.

A *Parent and Community Partnerships Survey* prepared by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association can be found in Section B-2. The survey may help you to determine the current and desired levels of parent and community partnerships at your school and serve as a starting point for discussions.

Another useful tool may be the *Parent and Community Partnership Inventory* that appears in Section B-3. This instrument can serve as a checklist to help determine your school's current activities and help you think of other ways to enhance involvement.

Once you have determined the level of partnership activity in your school, you may wish to consider enhancing your commitment to partnerships on one or several of the following categories:

- cooperating with other agencies in meeting basic needs;
- two-way communication;
- supporting learning at home and in the community;
- volunteer and advisory roles;
- collaboration and partnership; and,
- roles and responsibilities.

The following pages outline suggestions to enhance partnerships with parents relevant to each of the above categories.

Meeting Basic Needs

For children to grow and learn, their basic physical, emotional and psychological needs must be met. These needs include food, sleep, shelter and clothing, as well as affection, approval, positive direction and limits. Children who are ill, hungry, tired or have other unmet needs will have difficulty focusing on learning. Some families may need support from schools and communities to meet their children's basic needs.

School staff and school level organizations can help families meet their children's basic needs with the support and cooperation of community agencies by:

- offering workshops and providing information on parenting topics such as nutrition, communications and guidance;
- referring families to community agencies that offer parenting classes and other supports;
- asking an Elder to speak about traditional ways of child-rearing and the role of children;
- cooperating with other agencies to meet children's diverse needs through service integration;
- providing supervised lunch rooms at minimal cost;
- partnering with a community organization to provide students with meals and snacks;
- having a clothing exchange;
- emphasizing basic life skills in the learning program, such as personal hygiene, social skills, problem solving, etc.;
- creating "safe rooms" for students and their families; and,
- working for the creation of a stable and safe community surrounding the school through community development processes.

To help meet the basic needs of their children, **parents and families can:**

- communicate positive behaviours and values;
- praise and encourage their children;
- ensure that their children get enough sleep, have nourishing, well-balanced meals, and clothing appropriate for the weather;
- help children deal with problems in constructive ways to develop self-discipline and interpersonal skills;
- spend focused time with their children;
- look after their children's physical health;
- establish self-help groups to develop parenting skills; and,
- provide opportunities for children to play with others.

Developing Openness and Communication

Effective two-way communication among your school, students, families and the community is the foundation upon which all types of parent and community involvement and partnerships are based. Effective communication ensures that family and community members feel welcome in the school and encouraged to participate in school activities. It also encourages information sharing about children's needs and development, and about programs and issues in your school.

To create a welcoming school environment, teachers have found the following useful:

- warmly greet parents when you see them in the school;
- design signs that welcome parents and visitors, *Welcome to our school! Please Come to the Office* is more inviting than *Visitors Must Report to the Office*;
- post signs that help visitors find their way around the school;
- keep classroom doors open while teaching;
- post children's artwork in hallways, classrooms and reception areas;
- create an area with comfortable chairs and plants for parents and volunteers within the school;
- offer coffee, tea and cookies to parents and volunteers;
- schedule an opportunity once a week for parents to meet with the principal at times that meet the needs of working parents – no appointment needed;
- hold monthly family-teacher lunches or informal late afternoon or evening "coffee chats";
- arrange child care so that parents can participate in school activities;
- ensure people answering the phones are friendly and knowledgeable about the school;
- schedule parent meetings at times convenient to parents; and,
- encourage community use of school facilities after school hours and on weekends.

To encourage and support effective communication among school staff, families and community members, **schools can:**

- hold an Open House early in the school year to enable parents to meet their child's teacher and the principal and to learn about school and classroom plans and activities;
- solicit input and information from parents about their children and the school program through surveys, meetings, discussions, and returnable tear-out forms in school newsletters;

- use written communications – notices posted in public places, pamphlets, notes about upcoming school events, school newsletters, and articles in local newspapers;
- provide each family with a school magnet including the school phone numbers;
- use student agenda books as a communication tool;
- build a “telephone tree” to contact parents and share information;
- use voice-mail to remind parents about school holidays and events;
- provide information about the school to families, including a list of teachers, the grades they teach and a school map;
- send home a monthly calendar with school events and meetings; and,
- ensure all written communications are in clear, non-technical language so that they are easy to understand.

To ensure all discussions with students’ families are two-way, **teachers can:**

- structure parent-teacher-student conferences so that parents and students have an opportunity to participate;
- practise active listening skills such as paraphrasing;
- hold an information meeting or call parents early in the school year to discuss classroom expectations, evaluation practices and ways they can become involved in school activities; and,
- share the good news about students’ achievements and strengths through notes and personal phone calls to parents and students.

To support open communication, **parents can be encouraged to:**

- tell the teachers about:
 - their child’s likes and dislikes in and out of school;
 - anything that might affect their child’s school work or behaviour such as illness or changes in the family (e.g., divorce, new baby, family death);
- telephone, visit or write notes to their child’s teachers;
- use school agenda books to exchange information with their child’s teachers;
- encourage other parents in their child’s class or neighbourhood to attend school events by inviting them to share a ride or sit together;
- advise the school if their child is going to be absent; and,
- attend parent-teacher-student conferences/interviews.

Examples of school newsletters and introductory and year-end letters to parents are provided in Sections B-4 and B-5. These letters can benefit home-school relations by introducing the teacher, providing contact information, showing that the teacher is genuinely interested in parents’ concerns and setting the stage for further communications throughout the year. The letters may have a tear-off portion that enables parents to provide the teacher with information about their concerns, interests or willingness to volunteer.

Teachers are the primary link between families and schools.

(Jones, 2001)

Although only some parents want to be involved at the school building as volunteers or in leadership roles, just about all want to know what they can do at home each year to help their child do better in school.

(Epstein, 1994a)

Involving Families

Parents are much more likely to become involved at the school when teachers encourage and assist parents to help their children with schoolwork.

(Chavkin, 1993)

Some families find it difficult to become involved in the school. Reasons for this difficulty include shift work or other work responsibilities, family responsibilities, and social, cultural, language or economic differences. Teenage parents and single parents may also find it difficult to participate in school activities.

Research in parent participation in schools has taught us that while there are barriers to parent involvement, they can be overcome. Below are some of the barriers to parent involvement and some ideas about how to overcome them:

Time – Be flexible when scheduling meetings. Try different times of the day or week to allow all parents to take part at least occasionally. Try having a potluck to meet working parents' needs. Have meetings at community centres or other locations outside of the school building, if they are more accessible.

Not valued – Personally welcome all parents, especially those who appear to be withdrawn or uncomfortable. Ask about their interests and experiences. Listen. Actively seek opportunities for hesitant parents to use their experiences and talents to benefit the school.

Don't know how to contribute – Conduct a talent survey, then think of ways to use the parents' many talents. Create opportunities for parents to participate in classroom activities or to share information on careers, hobbies and pets. Arrange for workshops and other opportunities for parents and community members to develop leadership and organizational skills.

Don't understand the system – Write a parent's handbook covering school rules, procedures and where to find answers to typical questions. Use clear language and illustrations.

Child care – Accommodate and welcome younger siblings who may need to accompany their parents on field trips or in the school. If this is not possible, find an available room in the school for child care. Hire students to babysit during meetings.

Language barrier – Have printed materials translated – English on one side, another language on the other. Arrange for an interpreter at meetings and conferences.

Cultural differences – Be sensitive to cultural values, attitudes, manners and views of school that may be different from your own. Know the religious holidays and observances of the children in your class. Send home a request asking if there are any special cultural events that

On the one hand, most teachers say that they want more contact with parents, but seem to feel that many parents are unavailable or uninterested. On the other hand, most parents say that they want to find out more about what their children are supposed to learn and what they can do at home to help, although they need specific direction and support to carry out this role.

(Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991)

families would like to see celebrated. Acknowledge and respect families' cultural backgrounds by:

- providing translators when needed and using clear, non-technical language;
- ensuring that curriculum, school activities, instructional practices and school displays affirm students' cultural heritages;
- respecting different communication patterns such as pauses, silence and eye contact; and,
- learning about different cultures and respectfully asking questions.

Transportation – Visit parents in their home. Hold small group meetings in a community centre, at a parent's home or another convenient place. Arrange car pools and walking pools. Provide bus tickets if necessary.

Offer of only token participation – When people are invited to a meeting, too often it is to inform them of something, sell them on an idea, pacify them, influence or manipulate them, or get them to donate time or money. Parent meetings should look at real issues, listen to parents' ideas and consider their solutions. Parents need to be involved in the planning stages of a program, rather than at the end after most decisions have been made.

Not welcome – Arrange for professional development activities related to parent involvement and partnership for all school staff. Create an atmosphere in the school where parents feel welcome to drop in at school during the day. If possible, create a parent room at school and make parents welcome in the staff room. Post welcome signs in all languages spoken at the school.

Resistance on the part of formal leadership – Is there unwillingness (conscious or unconscious) among some of the existing leadership to involve others in decision making? Ensure that parents and community members are involved in planning, policy making and implementation of programs.

Parents have overwhelming personal and economic problems – Develop partnerships with Regional Intersectoral Committees, government and community agencies to provide information and advocacy to help parents secure the services they need, such as food banks, job training skills, medical treatment, child care, etc.

For a list of ways parents can help schools, see Section B-6.

Low literacy – Make contact by telephone, if possible. Provide information about literacy groups or tutors of English as a second language. For example, public libraries and regional colleges often offer free tutoring programs to enhance reading and writing skills. Plan a family literacy program as part of your parent partnership program.

Involving Aboriginal Parents and Community

Saskatchewan's Aboriginal populations are growing. Some of the ways that your school can ensure that families of Aboriginal descent are involved and feel welcome include:

- ensuring that Aboriginal content and perspectives are included across the curriculum;
- establishing Aboriginal Advisory Councils/Committees;
- ensuring board, council and school staff composition is reflective of the student population;
- supporting cultural activities in the school such as developing an Elders program, hosting a classroom exchange with a First Nations school or inviting an Aboriginal dance group to the school;
- ensuring all parents have equal access to opportunities to be involved in the school; and,
- creating a forum for Aboriginal parents to communicate their opinions on a broad-range of school-related topics, including course content and instruction.

Outreach strategies for ensuring Aboriginal, or other cultures' involvement, can be found in Section B-7. The following questions can be used to begin discussions about the involvement of Aboriginal groups in your school:

1. How many Aboriginal families are there in your school?
2. What percentage of Aboriginal parents in your school feel that your school is doing the best job possible to educate their children?
3. Does your school actively solicit views on education from parents of different cultures? If yes, how could this practice be improved? If no, why not? (Adapted from Saskatchewan Education, Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association and Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, 1988)

Supporting Learning at Home and in the Community

Many parents and communities work to create an environment that supports learning. Families can motivate learning by setting a positive example, encouraging and engaging in discussion that promotes self-discipline and positive values. Community agencies and individuals need to recognize and respect the needs and contributions of young people, and contribute to their wellbeing by supporting education as

In response to a need identified by school divisions and the Saskatchewan Community Schools Association, Saskatchewan Learning developed the Aboriginal Elder/Outreach Program in April 1999. The program funds initiatives that bring Aboriginal resource people, such as Elders, outreach workers or cultural advisors, into schools. Such initiatives play a vital role in creating a culturally-affirming school environment.

As a resource for school divisions, Saskatchewan Learning has developed *Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools: A Guide for School Divisions and Their Partners* (2001) to assist schools and school divisions in planning and implementing Aboriginal Elder or Outreach Programs. To obtain a copy call (306) 787-3938.

preparation for adult life. When parents need assistance in supporting their children's learning, **school staff can:**

- organize family literacy activities so that children and family members can improve their literacy skills together;
- prepare a booklet or videotape describing ways that parents can help their children learn basic skills;
- assign homework such as interviews or surveys that require students to interact with their families or other community members;
- provide ideas to incorporate learning into everyday life – e.g., using fractions in cooking, estimating time for a car trip, writing a shopping list, etc.;
- offer workshops to assist parents in creating a positive learning environment at home; and,
- develop learning contracts between parents, teachers and students within which students agree to do certain work to the best of their ability and parents and teachers agree to support that learning in specific ways.

The family is a child's first teacher. If a family thinks learning is important, it is more likely that their children will too. Consequently, children's academic readiness is partially a result of their experiences at home. For example, reading and writing generally come easier to those children whose parents talk with and read to them. In addition, the behaviour patterns that children learn at home largely determine whether they will get along with others at school or find interaction with teachers and other children difficult. To support learning at home and in the community, **parents can be encouraged to:**

- stress the importance of school and learning;
- praise their children for any accomplishments in school;
- see that their children attend school every day;
- provide a place and set aside regular time for children to do homework;
- read to their children often and encourage them to read;
- make regular visits to the library;
- encourage their children to write letters and stories;
- encourage their children to try new things;
- give children responsibility for appropriate household tasks;
- listen to, sing or play music with their children;
- provide paper, pens, crayons, glue, scissors, paints, modelling clay, arts and crafts materials;
- take their children on outings to interesting places (parks, museums, libraries); and,
- look for learning opportunities in everyday life.

The greatest impact on student achievement comes from family participation in well-designed at-home activities – and this is true “regardless of the family, racial, or cultural background or the parents’ formal education”...

One parent involvement strategy with proven effects on student achievement is interactive homework that allows youngsters to show, share, and demonstrate what they’re learning in class.

(Epstein, J. as quoted in Jones, 2001)
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Photocopy masters for parent handouts on Supporting Learning in the Home and other topics are provided in Section B-8.

Community Service Activities

Community and business groups can partner to provide community service opportunities for students. Community service activities provide students with the opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of the larger community beyond the school. Both the community and the students benefit from these activities. Students gain a greater sense of community, increased responsibility for others and personal satisfaction from helping others. In addition, they have the opportunity to learn or enhance skills.

Examples of community service activities in which students might become involved include:

- regularly visiting a nursing or senior citizens' home;
- beautifying a local park by planting flowers or picking up garbage; and,
- developing a community resource directory to give parents and other students containing information on community agencies that can help with health issues, job training and summer or part-time employment for teens, etc. (Connors & Epstein, 1994).

Guidelines for Community Service Activities

- Involve students in identifying and selecting community service opportunities.
- Be sure that the students' role is clearly understood by both the cooperating agencies and the students. This should include specific details regarding duties and expectations.
- Create linkages between community service activities and the curriculum.

What children need more than anything is the chance to attach to adults who are meaningful and important to them.

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Mentoring Programs

One of the main ways communities support learning is through providing mentorship opportunities. A mentor is someone who is able and willing to provide practical advice and instruction in a particular area, as well as provide encouragement to students. Mentors are positive role models, working with students in one-to-one or group situations for a period of months or even years. Mentors benefit from the opportunity to contribute to young people's development and to their community, as well as to further develop their own skills.

Examples of mentoring programs in schools include:

- **Artist or writer in residence program** – A school provides studio or office space to an artist or writer. In return, the artist or writer agrees to spend a certain number of hours per-month working with students.
- **Subject specialists** – These arrangements often come about through school/business partnerships or community volunteers. A business partner provides time for an employee to serve as a mentor. For example, a computer expert will work with students who are interested in computers or a gardener will work with students on a nature project.
- **Elders program** – In some schools Elders participate for specific purposes, while in others they are in residence at school much of the time. Elders provide practical advice and guidance, spiritual and cultural enhancements for the learning program, and serve as positive role models for all students.

Guidelines for Mentoring Programs

- Ensure that the responsibilities of both the mentor and the school are described as specifically as possible.
 - What tasks will the mentor be doing?
 - What is the mentor's schedule? For what length of time is the mentor committing her/himself?
- Involve as many students as possible. Programs in which the mentor works with groups reach more students than one-on-one programs. Try to include all students who are interested.

Ensure that mentors and school staff are committed to *Codes of Ethics* such as those provided in Section B-9.

Voluntary and Advisory Roles

Voluntary Roles

Parents and community members can become involved in the life of the school by supporting and participating in school events, volunteering at the school and by providing advice on school programs, priorities, supports to learning and policies.

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Volunteer opportunities may include fundraising, tutoring students, assisting in the library, speaking or helping out in the classroom and developing or delivering extra-curricular programs. As well, volunteers can provide valuable advice on a range of questions and issues in school level meetings or in informal conversation.

The responsibility for volunteer and advisory involvement in the school is shared. The principal and staff encourage and invite parents and community members to become involved, to make them feel part of the team and to provide opportunities for them to contribute in a meaningful way. On the other hand, parent and community members have a responsibility to step forward and let their willingness to become involved in the school program be known.

You may wish to develop a parent interest survey (see Section B-10) or a school volunteer application form (see Section B-11) to encourage and support volunteer involvement. Or, you may informally recruit volunteers during a school workshop session (see Section A-1 to A-4).

School staff can support parents and community members in volunteer roles by:

- welcoming families and community members as valued members of the school team;
- inviting family and community members to attend school activities;
- encouraging familiarity with the *Codes of Ethics* (see Section B-9);
- asking for and acting on parents' opinions and advice;
- establishing formal and informal structures and activities such as councils, dialogues and surveys that allow parents and community members to have formal advisory roles; and,
- developing a structured volunteer program and encouraging parents and community members to participate.

While much of the responsibility for involving parents and community members as volunteers is shared, so too are the benefits. Volunteers can play a number of valuable roles that support the school. When children see their parents involved as volunteers, it tells them that school is important. For parents, becoming a volunteer can help to boost their self-esteem, give them a creative outlet for their energies and develop job-related skills.

Volunteers can play many roles. **In the classroom, volunteers can:**

- tutor students or assist them in developing skills such as the use of computers or other employment-related skills;
- speak to the class about their job, hobby, culture or other experiences; and,
- help with creative projects and learning activities.

In school-wide activities, volunteers can:

- assist with supervising students in the lunch room or on the playground;
- work with students in beautifying and cleaning up the school grounds or neighbourhood;
- attend school events and parent-teacher conferences;
- help plan school activities such as field trips, career days and open houses;
- raise funds and mobilize community resources;
- serve on school level organizations, district boards of trustees, boards of education and other planning and decision-making organizations;
- support students in producing a school newspaper or yearbook;
- repair audio-visual and other equipment; and,
- assist in the school library.

After school or outside of the school, volunteers can:

- lead family literacy or parenting programs;
- organize or coach an after school athletic program;
- organize or support after school or noon-hour activities, such as drama, band, environmental club or photography club; and,
- build or supply something the school needs (e.g., playground equipment, art supplies and other resources).

For a list of ways to show appreciation to volunteers see Section B-12.

It is important to acknowledge the valuable contributions that volunteers make to a school.

What One Rural School is Doing:

In 2001-02, Balcarres School used Community School funding to hire three community members to create a database of volunteers for the school and to research how to make the school more inviting to parents and the community. Once operational, the computer-based system that will encompass not only Balcarres but also the large geographic area surrounding the town, will provide staff with immediate and up-to-date information on the availability, skills and interests of volunteers. This innovative and creative approach will help Balcarres School to broaden its commitment to authentic parent and community partnerships in education and is an approach that other schools may wish to explore.



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Advisory Roles: School Level Organizations

Another way for parents and the community to become involved is to participate in a school level organization. The purpose of most school level organizations is to provide a formal structure for parent and community involvement, partnership and communication with schools and to strengthen the school and its services to ensure a high quality of education for all students.

Saskatchewan has a variety of school level organizations, as outlined on page I-6.

Advisory groups, within the parameters of Board policy, can provide advice on:

- **Curriculum:** Each year a parent advisory group could review curriculum materials and plans. The group would indicate its preferences and rationale to administrators.
- **Budget:** A parent advisory group could provide recommendations to administrators regarding programs to continue, reduce or expand.
- **Personnel:** A parent advisory group could participate in the identification of selection criteria, interviewing, screening and recommending staff for paraprofessional positions.
- **Parent activities and recruiting volunteers:** A parent advisory group could offer suggestions to administrators or parent coordinators about parental involvement - types of activities, how to attain success with them and how to monitor them. (Refer to Balcarres example).
- **School climate:** A parent advisory group could offer suggestions regarding school operational guidelines. (Lyons, Robbins & Smith, 1983)

For example, in the Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division, parent associations meet twice per school year with the board of education to provide direction on strategic plans and budgets and to receive information about program initiatives in the school division. A diagram of communication paths among the variety of groups at work within the Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division appears in Section C-1.

In the next few pages, suggested purposes, goals and objectives of school level organizations will be outlined and the suggested roles of various members discussed. Tips for setting up and managing a school level organization are also provided. These ideas and suggestions may help you to determine the objectives and processes you wish to adopt in developing or enhancing your own school level organization. Ultimately, the mandate, roles and responsibilities of a school level organization must reflect the unique needs and character of the school and its community.

Examples of types of parent advisory committees appear in Section B-13.

Purpose

While each school level organization will have a unique purpose, most groups' *reason for being* will likely relate to:

- providing a formal structure for parent and community involvement, partnerships and communications with schools; and,
- strengthening the school and its services to ensure a high quality of education for all students.

Goals

In addition to establishing an overall purpose, most organizations state a number of broad goals to further explain the purpose. For example, a school may strive toward creating:

- partnerships and shared responsibility among families, communities and the school for the educational success and wellbeing of children and youth;
- strong communications and understanding among the school, families and community members; and,
- a high quality learning program supported by a comprehensive range of services and supports to meet the diverse needs of students.

Objectives

In addition to identifying broad goals, your organization may also wish to develop specific objectives related to achievement of the goals. The process of annually setting specific, measurable objectives can assist your group to stay focused.

For example, if strong communication is a goal, your organization may wish to establish specific objectives such as:

- to increase communication between the school and families by holding meetings at least six times a year attended by 30% of parents where topics of interest to parents are discussed; and,
- to increase communication between the school and the community by providing to the community newspaper/newsletter monthly columns on school events and education information.

Membership and Governance

There are a variety of ways to determine the membership of your school level organization. The most common are:

- **Election** – election procedures for district boards of trustees in rural areas are stated in *The Education Act, 1995* while other school level organizations may conduct elections at well-publicized annual meetings;

- **Volunteer** – some school level organizations use a voluntary process that allows all those who are interested an opportunity to participate; and,
- **Appointment** – in some cases, such as some local school advisory committees in urban areas, members are appointed.

Depending upon its organizational structure, your school level organization may wish to explore various models of governance.

- **The Community Model** – everyone with a student in the school is a member of the school level organization and has the right to attend meetings and participate. The objective is to get as much parent and community involvement and support as possible. Interested individuals from the community are also invited to participate. Each school level organization has an executive which is either elected or appointed depending on the needs of the community. General elections are often considered the best way to elect or select members. However, in selecting the executive it is important to recognize that elections can be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for some members of the community and can result in an executive that is not fully representative.
- **The Representative Model** – elected members represent a constituency (e.g., parents, community members, school staff, teachers or students) and are responsible for representing its views. These elected members carry out the operations of the organization and report back to the wider school community at least twice per year, in addition to attending an annual meeting.
- **The Assembly Model** – members are also elected by the general membership (school community), but do not necessarily represent a specific constituency. Meetings are open to the general membership, who are more directly involved in making decisions for the organization (Alberta Education, 1999). Alberta Learning web-site: <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/>

However the membership of your organization is determined, you may wish to spend some time discussing how to achieve equitable and representative participation, reflecting the composition of the school and the community.

Whether a school level organization or its executive is chosen by election, volunteer or appointment depends on the circumstances of a school and its community. Building an effective group takes time and requires the committed effort of all those involved.

Building Collaboration and Partnerships

There are any number of possible collaborative arrangements and partnerships among schools and community organizations or businesses. Two examples include:

1. Integrated School-Linked Services; and,
2. School/Business Partnerships.

1. Integrated School-Linked Services

Many students face complex social and emotional issues that are barriers to their learning and success in school. These barriers, such as family instability, poverty, teen pregnancy, abuse and neglect, cannot be resolved by the school alone. Since 1993, Integrated School-Linked Services has been promoted as a way for schools, boards, community organizations and community agencies to work together to provide the comprehensive, coordinated range of supports that these students require in order to thrive. Many schools and school divisions have undertaken innovative and effective ways to provide the services needed by students and families.

In February 2002, the Government of Saskatchewan, in response to the Role of the School Task Force, adopted the School^{PLUS} vision where schools have two functions:

- *to educate children and youth* – developing the whole child, intellectually, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically; and,
- *to support service delivery* – schools serve as centres at the community level for the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice and other services for children and their families.

Examples of Integrated School-Linked Services:

There are numerous examples of integrated school-linked service initiatives underway in Saskatchewan that provide a range of coordinated health, social services, justice, recreation and other supports for students. Supports include:

- **nutrition programs** to provide breakfast, lunch and snacks for children in need. As well, programs provide information about food and nutrition and opportunities for skill development to family members;

For further information regarding Integrated School-Linked Services refer to the following Saskatchewan Learning publications: *Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Policy Framework* (1994a) and *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide* (1994b)



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Establishing new relationships requires listening, creating a climate of respect and trust and coming to understand the mutual benefits that will ensue if partnership relationships are firmly established.

(Peters, 1991)

- **early intervention/preschool programs** for young at-risk children;
- **community kitchens** where parents can learn about nutrition and meal preparation;
- **youth centres** where teens can participate in after school sports, music and other enjoyable and enriching activities. As well, they can receive counselling and other supports; and,
- **educational and health programs** for teen moms and their babies.

Guidelines for Integrated School-Linked Services

The key steps in implementing an integrated school-linked services project are to:

- **Establish a Planning Team** – Establish or work with an existing interagency planning team made up of representatives from provincial, municipal, and human service providers and interest groups, including health, education, social services, justice and recreation, as well as members of the client group.
- **Conduct a Strengths-Based Needs Identification** – What are your community's strengths? What are the untapped resources and supports in your community? What are the most critical needs in your community? Are services appropriate? Coordinated? How can service delivery be strengthened? What preventative approaches are in place?
- **Identify Potential Partnerships** – Identify potential partners to help you address issues and meet school/community needs. What supports or services can they contribute? Partners may include school or health board representatives; provincial, municipal, First Nations and Métis governments; human service providers; community groups; and, organizations, such as churches or businesses.
- **Make a Plan** – Develop a plan with the participation of everyone concerned. The plan, incorporating the community's strengths should include:
 - a shared vision;
 - shared, achievable goals and expectations on how partners would like to see services delivered;
 - supports required to achieve the vision (services available, gaps);
 - allocation or reallocation of resources;
 - definition of roles and linkages for each partner;
 - information and resource sharing;
 - problem solving and reporting protocols;
 - action plan with timelines;

- a commitment from partners to celebrate achievements and successes; and,
 - an evaluation framework with mutual accountability.
- **Create an Inventory of Services and Resources** – Develop a strengths-based inventory of existing services and resources in the community. For each partner, list the overall purpose, services provided, functions served, and the name and phone number of a contact person. Estimate the level of coordination required.
 - **Do a Service Analysis** – Evaluate the match between existing services with the identified strengths and needs of the community. Is there a case management system in place to provide for the co-ordination of a number of services a family or individual may require? Refer to *Saskatchewan Human Services: Integrated Case Management* (Government of Saskatchewan, 1998) for additional information on integrated case management processes. Where can resources be reallocated? Where can new resources be found? What are the opportunities for partnership and collaboration with other communities?
 - **Implement the Plan** – Implement specific actions from your plan.
 - **Evaluate** – Keep track of and acknowledge achievements and successes. Refer to *Saskatchewan Human Services: Interagency Projects: An Evaluation Guide* (Government of Saskatchewan, 1997) for additional information on interagency project evaluation.

2. School/Business Partnerships

School and business partnerships are collaborative, mutually-beneficial relationships designed to enhance learning opportunities for students and provide instructional supports for teachers. The key principle in forming partnerships is that the wellbeing and education of young people is respected and supported. For the business, this includes respecting the values and rules of the school and maintaining the confidentiality of student information.

Businesses can contribute to the school by:

- providing tours and resource materials for students and teachers;
- using company newsletters to advise employees of current issues and needs in education and of the importance of parental participation;
- serving as a site for high school students enrolled in work experience programs or job shadowing opportunities;

Partnerships benefit schools by providing additional resources to strengthen and enhance the learning program.

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- providing time for employees to volunteer at the school as tutors, mentors, guest speakers and to attend parent-teacher-student conferences;
- providing funding and/or in-kind supports to enhance the learning program; and,
- participating on school or community level organizations when appropriate.

Benefits for the business partner may include:

- enhanced corporate image, profit;
- increased productivity in the workplace;
- enhanced morale;
- improved organizational and planning skills;
- ongoing source of professional development for employees;
- evaluation of and improvement in current training procedures;
- renewed emphasis on training and upgrading of skills;
- an opportunity to practise existing skills and develop new ones;
- personal enrichment and fulfillment;
- better understanding of challenges and issues facing public education;
- greater awareness of the role business can play in the personal and academic development of students;
- greater appreciation of student talent and potential;
- sense of accomplishment;
- enhanced volunteer skills;
- access to a talented labour source; and,
- increased support for the employer through meaningful corporate community involvement and partnerships.

Guidelines for School/Business Partnerships

- Ensure that the board of education's policies and procedures for developing school/business partnerships are adhered to.
- Establish guidelines for the way the school and the business will work together, including:
 - the responsibilities of both parties;
 - the length of the agreement;
 - the objectives to be achieved; and,
 - a process for regularly evaluating progress toward objectives.
- Focus on human interaction – in addition to contributing instructional materials, playground equipment or funds to the school, which are of significant value, the most successful partnerships occur when the business partners' employees give their time and energy to students and when there is a high level of personal interaction.

- **Emphasize the goals of the learning program – be sure that the activities undertaken as part of a partnership support the goals of the curriculum and promote student learning.**
- **Focus on a topic that is relevant to the business partner – businesses are more likely to support topics and areas of the curriculum that are of interest to them and their employees (MacDowell, 1989).**
- **Structure the partnership so that there are varied activities – different activities appeal to different students. A partnership with several activities will reach more students than a partnership focusing on only a few activities.**
- **Organize activities so that all students are involved.**
- **Provide opportunities for teacher development – teachers can get new ideas and learn new skills by interacting with business people, touring business sites or job shadowing.**
- **Ensure that the companies, organizations and institutions demonstrate good corporate citizenship.**

Characteristics of Effective and Ethical Business and Education Partnerships include:

- enhance the quality and relevance of education for learners;
- mutually benefit all partners;
- treat fairly and equitably all those served by the partnership;
- provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared responsibilities toward education;
- acknowledge and celebrate each partner's contributions through appropriate forms of recognition;
- are consistent with the ethics and core values of all partners;
- are based on the clearly-defined expectations of all partners;
- are based on shared or aligned objectives that support the goals of the partner organizations;
- recognize and respect each partner's expertise;
- measure and evaluate partnership performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement;
- are developed and structured in consultation with all partners;
- identify clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for all partners; and,
- involve individual participants on a voluntary basis.

Adapted from Business-Education Partnerships Forum, National Business and Education Centre (Conference Board of Canada, 1997)

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- increased productivity in the workplace;
- enhanced morale;
- improved organizational and planning skills;
- ongoing source of professional development for employees;
- evaluation of and improvement in current training procedures;
- renewed emphasis on training and upgrading of skills;
- an opportunity to practise existing skills and develop new ones;
- personal enrichment and fulfillment;
- better understanding of challenges and issues facing public education;
- greater awareness of the role business can play in the personal and academic development of students;
- greater appreciation of student talent and potential;
- sense of accomplishment;
- enhanced volunteer skills;
- access to a talented labour source; and,
- increased support for the employer through meaningful corporate community involvement and partnerships.

Guidelines for School/Business Partnerships

- Ensure that the board of education's policies and procedures for developing school/business partnerships are adhered to.
- Establish guidelines for the way the school and the business will work together, including:
 - the responsibilities of both parties;
 - the length of the agreement;
 - the objectives to be achieved; and,
 - a process for regularly evaluating progress toward objectives.
- Focus on human interaction – in addition to contributing instructional materials, playground equipment or funds to the school, which are of significant value, the most successful partnerships occur when the business partners' employees give their time and energy to students and when there is a high level of personal interaction.

- **Emphasize the goals of the learning program – be sure that the activities undertaken as part of a partnership support the goals of the curriculum and promote student learning.**
- **Focus on a topic that is relevant to the business partner – businesses are more likely to support topics and areas of the curriculum that are of interest to them and their employees (MacDowell, 1989).**
- **Structure the partnership so that there are varied activities – different activities appeal to different students. A partnership with several activities will reach more students than a partnership focusing on only a few activities.**
- **Organize activities so that all students are involved.**
- **Provide opportunities for teacher development – teachers can get new ideas and learn new skills by interacting with business people, touring business sites or job shadowing.**
- **Ensure that the companies, organizations and institutions demonstrate good corporate citizenship.**

Characteristics of Effective and Ethical Business and Education Partnerships include:

- enhance the quality and relevance of education for learners;
- mutually benefit all partners;
- treat fairly and equitably all those served by the partnership;
- provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared responsibilities toward education;
- acknowledge and celebrate each partner's contributions through appropriate forms of recognition;
- are consistent with the ethics and core values of all partners;
- are based on the clearly-defined expectations of all partners;
- are based on shared or aligned objectives that support the goals of the partner organizations;
- recognize and respect each partner's expertise;
- measure and evaluate partnership performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement;
- are developed and structured in consultation with all partners;
- identify clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for all partners; and,
- involve individual participants on a voluntary basis.

Adapted from Business-Education Partnerships Forum, National Business and Education Centre (Conference Board of Canada, 1997)

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for parent and community involvement and partnerships is shared among the principal, teachers, parents, families and community members.

Role of the Principal

The principal provides leadership in a variety of ways: by initiating dialogue concerning expectations and school-wide goals, by ensuring that decision-making takes place at the local level, by establishing efficient planning procedures, by encouraging parental and community involvement, and by managing and controlling the facility.

(Excerpt from *Directions*, Saskatchewan Education, 1984)

The principal is the instructional leader in the school. In addition to managing many administrative and educational tasks, he or she encourages and facilitates parent and community involvement and partnerships. This requires values and skills in collaboration, group interaction and problem solving. A strong commitment to the development of parent and community partnerships is essential.

The principal:

- recognizes that parent and community partnerships are critical to the responsiveness and success of students in the learning program;
- institutes and maintains a full range of activities and approaches to ensure parent and community involvement and partnerships;
- provides leadership and encouragement to staff regarding the adoption and continuous use of welcoming and inclusive approaches, and facilitates staff development opportunities related to parent and community partnerships;
- identifies and develops partnerships with community agencies, mobilizing resources and supports;
- encourages the involvement of all parents and community members, including those who have traditionally been under-represented;
- actively participates in school level organizations;
- works closely with school level organizations, recognizes and encourages potential leaders and works with the group to ensure that membership reflects the population of the school; and,
- oversees and retains responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school.

Role of Teachers

Teachers' primary responsibilities are to plan, facilitate and evaluate students' learning. Partnerships with parent and community members can make a strong contribution to the learning program. To encourage and facilitate parent and community partnerships, teachers:

- develop their knowledge and understanding of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of the students they teach;
- initiate and develop effective two-way communication and liaison with parents and the home through a variety of formal and informal means;
- actively welcome and invite parents and community members into the school and identify opportunities for them to make a meaningful contribution;
- work cooperatively with parents, community members, human service providers and others involved in the school to achieve excellence in the learning program and to meet the diverse needs of students;
- work with parents and community members in planning school events and addressing issues;
- commit to regular professional development in methodologies for enhancing parent and community involvement and partnerships, cultural affirmation and team-building techniques; and,
- have representation on school level organizations such as local school advisory committees, parent-teacher organizations, school councils, and home and school associations.

The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage and guide parent involvement.

(Dauber & Epstein, 1993)

Roles of Parents and Families

Parents play a key role in the success of students and the school. They are advocates for their children and can provide valuable information on individual student learning styles and needs. Their interest in and support for the learning process is critical to student success.

Parents and family:

- provide for their children's basic physical, emotional, psychological and cultural needs so that their children are ready to learn;

The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement.

(Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991)

Research shows family-involvement programs have to be well-planned, comprehensive (reaching all families), and long-lasting – all of which cost money. “It’s an investment that will pay off” – in higher test scores, better attendance, more homework completed, fewer special-education placements, fewer discipline problems, better attitudes toward school, higher graduation rates, and increased college enrollment”.

(Henderson, A. as quoted in Jones, 2001).
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- create a home environment in which learning is supported, valued and encouraged;
- communicate regularly with teachers about their children's interests, needs and learning;
- actively participate in their children's learning and in school programs and activities, providing input and support to the extent that they are able; and,
- participate in groups and activities for the purpose of providing advice and supports about school issues, policies and programs.

Roles of Community Members and Organizations

Community members and organizations, including human service providers, Aboriginal organizations, cultural organizations, family service centres, churches, service clubs and businesses have a role to play in supporting students' learning and their physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. The role of these organizations focuses on forming partnerships with the school for the benefit of the students, the learning program and the school community.

Community members:

- work with school staff, school level organizations and parents in providing a range of supports, including expertise, financial and human resources, and services to meet the diverse needs of students and their families;
- provide a safe and caring community surrounding the school;
- respect the values and rules of the school; and,
- maintain the confidentiality of student records or other personal and confidential information obtained while working or participating at the school.

For examples of commitments that all members of a school community can make see Section B-14.

Roles and Responsibilities within School Level Organizations

Boards of education are assigned specific responsibility for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education within a school division through *The Education Act, 1995*. A board may delegate mutually agreed upon responsibilities to a school level organization. The following suggested roles and responsibilities are drawn from the literature on effective school level organizations and are not intended to reduce the responsibility or the authority of boards of education or their administration (directors, superintendents, principals). The list is not all-inclusive nor is it necessarily meant to be adopted in full. Rather, organizations are encouraged to discuss all the possibilities and adopt those that best meet the needs of families, the school and the community.

The roles and responsibilities within school level organizations have been categorized into six main areas, including:

1. Planning and Decision Making;
2. Communication;
3. Partnerships and Resources;
4. Member Development; and,
5. Operation of the Organization.

1. Planning and Decision Making

- In partnership with school staff, students, parents and community members, create school improvement plans and activities, including development of a mission, values and priorities of the school.
- Participate with the principal and school staff in developing principles to guide school planning and operations on issues such as discipline, parent/school communications, school events, transportation and student needs.
- Provide advice to school administrators on the school program, including the range of programs offered, locally-modified courses and extra-curricular activities.
- Recommend to the board of education, criteria for recruiting school staff.
- Encourage community use of facilities and recommend improvements to facilities and equipment.

Two Common Ways of Making Decisions

Majority Vote Model:

The issue is discussed and a vote taken. The majority vote decides the issue.

Consensus Building Model:

Consensus does not necessarily mean that all parties agree, but that all can live with a decision for the sake of the group's ability to move forward. Consensus will almost always involve compromise.

(Alberta Education, 1995)

2. Communication

- Encourage effective communication among school, families and community.
- Seek the views of the school community and share them with the principal and school staff.
- Communicate regularly with the board of education to provide suggestions for division policy and to provide a summary report of your organization's activities.
- Maintain the trust under which confidential information is exchanged.

3. Partnerships and Resources

- Identify and solicit support and resources from the community, including fundraising.
- Promote parent and community partnerships in the school.
- Facilitate Integrated School-Linked Services.
- Form partnerships and linkages with community human service agencies, businesses and other supports.
- Participate in community development activities, where appropriate.

4. Member Development

- Increase knowledge and understanding of school and student issues and needs.
- Identify and encourage potential leaders among parents and community members.
- Encourage and support all community members in developing skills and abilities for participation.
- Attract committed members to participate in activities that support student, school and community development.

5. Operation of the Organization

- Use a process of decision-making that encourages multiple views to be brought forward and consolidated into a "single voice" decision.

Take care to ensure that the advisory council represents the total community - ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and gender. An unrepresentative council will have little impact or credibility.

(Decker, 1997)

- Hold regular public meetings.
- Develop a constitution that includes procedures for selection of members, formal rules of conduct and procedures for ensuring compliance. Rules of conduct and procedures should include guidelines for addressing conflict resolution and conflict of interest, as well as guidelines for ensuring confidentiality. A Code of Ethics should also be developed.
- Establish documentation procedures for the recording and reporting of decisions that will be made public. This should include an annual report to the larger school community.
- Manage any funds raised by your organization, as well as funds allocated to the school and/or community, maintaining accurate public records and preparing an annual financial statement.

Additional Resources and Information

The following materials and resources regarding parent, school and community partnerships are listed according to the following categories:

- Parent and Community Partnerships in Schools; and,
- School Level Organizations.

Parent and Community Partnerships in Schools

Saskatchewan

Involving Parents and Community in Schools: Report and Future Plans (Saskatchewan Education, May 1999)

This report outlines several key themes identified during a multi-faceted, community-based public discussion on increasing parent and community involvement in schools.

Involving Parents and Community in Schools: What is the Appropriate Support Structure and Role? (Saskatchewan Education, August 1997)

This document was a public discussion paper inviting input to the roles, responsibilities, relationships and processes among boards of education, district boards of trustees, and parents and community members. The discussion took place in 1997.

Saskatchewan Association of School Councils (SASC)

SASC promotes the partnership of parents, students and the community at large in the advancement of learning, encourages parents to participate in educational activities and decision-making, and acts as a voice for parents. To obtain resources contact SASC at (306) 955-5723 or sasc@sk.sympatico.ca.

Effective Beginnings: A Guide to New Partnerships in Schools (1995) (Booklet, 27 pages)

A guidebook prepared for the use of principals, parents, teachers and community members who are participating for the first time as partners on a school council or forming a partnership to advise and consult on school issues.

Parents Are Partners in Schools (Brochure)

Parent Involvement: The Key to Your Child's Success (Brochure)

Parents Assist Learning and Schooling (PALS)

PALS is a parenting workshop program with training manuals consisting of three sections: Parenting Skills, Helping Children Learn and A Guide to Facilitating the Workshops. The program offers a series of twelve workshops to parents.

PALS: Parenting Skills

Topic One: The Important Role of Parents

Topic Two: Building Self-Esteem

Topic Three: Parenting Styles

Topic Four: Communication

Topic Five: Being a Role Model

Topic Six: Discipline

PALS: Helping Children Learn

Topic Seven: Kids and Television

Topic Eight: Working with Teachers and Schools

Topic Nine: Responsibility and Homework

Topic Ten: Reading and Writing

Topic Eleven: Technology and Computers

Topic Twelve: Preparing for Careers and Jobs

National Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week encourages parents and the wider community to recognize the important contributions, both personal and professional, of teachers and school staff to the lives of children.

For more information on having a PALS workshop in your school, or becoming a PALS workshop leader yourself, contact the SASC office.

Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA)

The SSTA represents all school division boards of education, conseils scolaires francsaskois and district boards of trustees and local school advisory committees in Saskatchewan. The SSTA offers a workshop program for strengthening the parent-school-community partnership. Another service is the educational research reports. To obtain resources contact the SSTA at (306) 569-0750 or ssta@ssta.sk.ca.

Extending the Learning Community: Involving Parents and Families in Schools (SSTA Research Centre Report # 94-09).

This report is a resource for educators and school boards wishing to encourage meaningful parent and family involvement in education. Some topics discussed include: a rationale for involving parents and families, definitions for meaningful involvement, barriers to involvement and guidelines for policy. A full text version is available online at: <http://www.ssta.sk.ca>

Parental Choice in Schooling: Violence, Values, and Vouchers (SSTA Research Centre Report #96-07)

This study examined the adequacy, as well as the potential of public schools to accommodate the values and aspirations of parents in the education of their children.

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/parent_involvement.htm

Public Opinions About Education in Saskatchewan (SSTA Research Centre Report #95-07)

A survey of the general public regarding issues affecting K-12 education in Saskatchewan.

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/parent_involvement.htm

Responses to "Involving Parents and Community in Schools" SSTA Consultation (SSTA Research Centre Report #97-11)

This report summarizes the ideas discussed at a series of ten consultation meetings about parent involvement and school councils. Some of the questions answered are how will school councils change the role of the school principal? Who should have a say in school councils? How should school councils be elected? What is the role of school councils?

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/parent_involvement.htm

School-Community Relations Handbook (SSTA Research Centre Report #66).

This manual presents a variety of alternatives, which can be used by a board or individual school to develop and enhance school-community relations. It includes information about

understanding the community; using communication media; involving students in the community; and, involving the community in the school. It is available from the SSTA and a full-text version appears online at:

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/school_improvement/66.htm

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation:

To obtain resources contact the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation at (306) 373-1660 or stf@stf.sk.ca.

Take a Look At Parents & Teachers as Partners (Pamphlet)

How Can I Help My Children Do Better in School (Pamphlet)

Take a Look At Homework (Pamphlet)

Canada

Canadian Parents Online provides articles and advice on a variety of parenting issues, including education.

<http://www.canadianparents.com/>

Canadian School Boards Association:

Parents Welcome (Fall 1994)

<http://www.cdnsba.org>

Other Countries

Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools

(Lyons, Robbins & Smith, 1982). This handbook of ideas and suggestions was compiled from information collected in a national study of parental involvement in the United States. The findings are applicable to any school or division interested in enhancing parent and community involvement or partnerships. The handbook is a comprehensive guide to parent involvement and is comprised of three parts:

- successful strategies and practices related to establishing parental involvement;
- a self-assessment manual to assist schools and school divisions in evaluating current activities and planning improvements where they are needed; and,
- resource materials and guides to their uses, including forms, questionnaires, parent guidelines, etc.

Parents Helping Parents is a comprehensive, not-for-profit family resource centre run for and by parents of children with special needs.

<http://www.php.com>

The Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (ALLPIE) assists and encourages parental involvement in all types of schooling including public, private and at-home. The site includes workshop and conference information, as well as information on how to access this organization's extensive resource lending library.

<http://www.croton.com/allpie/>

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), Parents' Web Page is dedicated to the dual mission of promoting: (1) the inherent rights, education and wellbeing of children from infancy through early adolescence; and, (2) high standards of preparation and professional growth for educators.

<http://www.udel.edu/bateman/acei/parents.htm>

The National Parenting Centre site contains articles relating to parenting issues, from pregnancy to raising adolescent children. It includes a "chat" area for parents and "Seal of Approval Reports" of children's books and educational products.

<http://www.tnpsc.com>

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is a not-for-profit organization focusing on education research. The Pathways to School Improvement page provides information on a number of important issues, such as: at-risk students, family and community leadership, literacy, policy and professional development.

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs>

The Urban Education's Urban/Minority Families Web Page contains educational publications, articles for parents and educators, annotated bibliographies and Internet resources.

<http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/>

The US Department of Education web-site contains numerous publications for parents including information on early childhood education, family involvement in education, learning activities and reading improvement. Of particular interest is the *Helping Your Child Series*.

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/>

School Level Organizations

Saskatchewan

New Directions for School-Level Governance

(SSTA Research Centre Report #96-12)

This report discusses the purpose of school councils, who should have a say in school councils, how school councils should be elected, and the

supports necessary to make school councils effective and accountable.
http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/parent_involvement.htm

Parent and Teacher Views of Parent Involvement in Local School Governance (SSTA Research Centre Report #99-06)

This document outlines how parents and teachers view increased parent involvement in local school governance, and indicates what supports are needed.

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/parent_involvement.htm

Saskatchewan Association of School Councils (SASC) is a volunteer organization that focuses on the issues facing parents with school-aged children. The site includes an event calendar, publications, information on the Parents Assist Learning and Schooling Program, a newsletter and links to other education related sites.

www.schoolcouncils.com

School Councils: The Saskatchewan Vision (SSTA Report #96-13)

This document represents the final report of the School Level Governance Working Group, a body established by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association in fall 1996. The purpose of this group was to take a critical look at the concept of school level governance and to develop a consensus view of what this concept means for Saskatchewan. It is available from the SSTA and a full-text version appears online at:

<http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/governance/96-13.htm>

Canada

Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation (CHSF) is a national, non-profit and non-partisan umbrella organization for ten provincial affiliates representing parents committed to improving the quality of education available to their children. The site lists publications and provides links to other organizations of interest to parents.

<http://www.cepan.ca> (links, Canadian Organizations)

Education Governance in Canada: The Current Status of School Councils (March 1998)

This report explains the four fundamental roles of school councils and provides a definition of school councils. Included in this document is a province to province review and description of the national situation.

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/partnership/about/school_councils.htm

School Council Manuals From Other Provinces:

- Alberta
 - *School Councils Handbook: Meaningful Involvement for the School Community* (1999)
http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/pubs/
- Manitoba
 - *Advisory Councils for School Leadership: A Handbook for Parents, Teachers, and Administrators* (1996)
<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/metks4/docs>
- Ontario
 - *School Council Handbook: A Resource for Members of School Councils* (1996)
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/resource/resource.html>

***III. Suggestions for Boards of
Education and School Division
Administration***

III. Suggestions for Boards of Education and School Division Administration

Contents

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Roles and Responsibilities	III-10
School Division Administration	III-11
Describes some activities that facilitate the involvement of parents and community members with schools.	
Additional Resources and Information	III-11
Provides references to websites that contain information on school board policies and policy development.	

Boards of Education

As a board member, you can support parent and community involvement and partnerships by providing enabling policies, adequate financial resources, and by encouraging staff to invite and sustain effective parent participation. With your commitment, a comprehensive, system-wide approach can be fostered.

In supporting parent and community partnerships, you may work with individual parent and community members, as well as a variety of school level organizations including:

- conseils d'écoles;
- local school advisory committees;
- parent advisory councils;
- parent-teacher organizations;
- school councils; and,
- other local advisory groups.

Effective schools and school systems foster the active involvement of their communities in program delivery and school governance.

(Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1993a)

Some groups are legislated or mandated and all have varying roles and responsibilities. In some school divisions, several of these groups may exist and therefore, supporting interaction among groups can be an important role for the board.

The following pages provide suggestions to enhance discussion about and planning for effective parent and community involvement and partnerships division-wide. The suggestions are organized around five topics that encompass the ways that your board can support and encourage parent and community involvement and partnerships, including:

- Awareness;
- Supportive Policies and Guidelines;
- Communication;
- Shared Responsibility Beyond Advisory Functions; and,
- Roles and Responsibilities.

Awareness

As a board member, you know that parent and community partnerships are critical to the success of students and responsiveness in the learning program. You may be called upon to communicate this message to others in your division. The following are a few of the benefits of parent and community involvement and partnerships:

- involvement can contribute to improved student performance and attitudes;
- parents and communities can strengthen education programs by contributing to the development of priorities and helping to develop and deliver programs, while ensuring relevancy;
- with partnerships, responsibility for the education and wellbeing of children is shared among the school, the family and the community; and,
- through active participation, parents and community members better understand the issues facing today's schools and feel more confident with their education system.

The benefits of a strong school level organization include opportunities to:

- create and maintain good communication among students, parents and teachers;
- support the school, helping to improve the quality of education;
- identify the needs of a particular school and communicate concerns and recommendations to the board of education;
- inform parents of new ideas in education;
- encourage and expand community involvement in the education system;

Parent and community organizations want to be heard and be involved in decisions about education. As a board, you can provide opportunities to ensure local input and encourage input at all other levels of the education system.

- utilize the resources of the community to support new programs;
- raise funds to be used for the betterment of the school, families and community; and,
- coordinate volunteer efforts.

A more detailed list of student, parent, teacher, school and community benefits appears in Section B-1. Other helpful resources, such as the *Parent and Community Partnerships in Education Survey* and the *Parent and Community Partnership Inventory*, appear in Sections B-2 and B-3. They can be used to spark discussion at the board level, among administrators or in school-based groups about the preferred levels and types of involvement.

Supportive Policies and Guidelines

Boards of education can provide leadership and encourage and sustain parent and community involvement and partnerships through the development of supportive policies that clarify roles and organize and sustain the efforts of trustees, teachers, staff, parents, students and the community. The challenge for boards and administrators is to implement and support effective approaches in all schools.

"Policy development should be treated as a process – an opportunity to begin an ongoing dialogue with the community – rather than as an end in itself" (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1994). It should reflect the combined efforts of trustees, students, teachers and the community. Policy development can be the first step in creating a positive and welcoming climate.

The process of developing the policy may be more important than the policy itself. For it is the process that develops awareness, interest, and ownership. The resulting policy then reflects commonly understood and supported practice.

(Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1994)

There are a number of policies your board could develop that would support parent and community involvement and partnerships in education. Some of these may include policies for:

1. Community use of school facilities:

Such a policy will encourage the use of facilities outside of regular school hours for school level organization meetings, community events or activities. The Buffalo Plains School Division and Coronach School have developed policies regarding community use of school facilities and equipment (see Section C-2).

2. The establishment of school level organizations:

Policies can explain how to establish school level organizations and provide suggestions about who to invite, how to run effective meetings, decision-making styles, mechanisms for communicating with the board and conflict resolution. The Regina Public and Swift Current School Divisions, and Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education have created policies on local school advisory committees (see Section C-3).

For more information related to ongoing renewal and support for the school plan refer to *Building Communities of Hope: Community Schools Policy Framework* (1996). Contact Saskatchewan Learning at 787-3938.

For more information on Integrated School-Linked Services, you may contact Saskatchewan Learning at 787-3938 for a copy of *Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Policy Framework* (1994a) and *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide* (1994b).

For further information on School and Business Partnerships, please refer to page II-17.

3. Volunteers in schools:

This type of policy may outline what steps to take in encouraging volunteer involvement, including criminal checks, if desired. The Saskatoon West School Division has provided a sample policy on volunteers in schools (see Section C-4).

4. Ongoing renewal and support for the school plan:

A policy for ongoing renewal of the school plan would outline a dynamic planning process that engages staff, parents and community members in continual planning and evaluation to ensure program improvement.

5. Integrated School-Linked Services:

Integrated School-Linked Services policies encourage the use of collaborative processes to forge partnerships among school divisions, schools, communities, First Nations and Métis organizations, and provincial and community human service providers. The purpose is to identify new approaches to planning and new configurations of service delivery that are more coordinated, comprehensive, and responsive in dealing with the diverse needs of students and families at risk.

6. Conflict resolution:

Boards and school level organizations should establish clear policies and guidelines for dealing with controversial issues. Some of the questions your policy may address include:

- What channels do parents have to make their concerns known to the board?
- Should parents be consulted on a particular matter? Why or why not?
- What are some steps your board can take to reduce the potential of confrontation between parents and trustees or staff?
- What are some of the most common concerns raised by parents?

Your policy can suggest guidelines for parents and students who have concerns. The policy should recognize the parent or guardian's right to communicate directly with a board member or school division administrator or to have an advocate present. However, you may want to encourage parents and guardians to first raise their concerns with the person with whom the problem is associated (for instance, a teacher). If resolution cannot be achieved, the parent or guardian may subsequently contact higher levels of authority such as the principal, director of education or board of education for assistance in reaching a resolution.

Sample policies for dealing with complaints and grievances used by Regina Catholic Schools and Saskatoon East School Division appear in Section C-5. Tips for effective communication for handling conflicts appear in Section B-15.

7. School and Business Partnerships:

The board of education plays a key role in establishing policies and guidelines related to school and business partnerships. The principal and school staff assist in the implementation of policies.

The Components of an Educational Policy

Most policies follow a similar format and include:

- **a statement of philosophy or rationale** – which describes the reasons for the policy;
- **the policy statement itself** – usually a short statement of the goal the policy is intended to achieve;
- **references to the legislation** – which indicates that the board has the authority to establish policy on this matter; and,
- **guidelines for specific issues relating to the theme of the policy** – for example, a policy on school volunteers might provide guidelines for recruiting and screening volunteers.

Policy Development Steps:

The following general steps for developing board policy can be applied to the development of policy regarding parent and community involvement and partnerships:

- 1. Identify the stakeholders.** Include key stakeholder groups in the development of policies that affect them and in policies that are potentially controversial. Who the stakeholders are depends on the nature of the policy being developed. Students, parents, teachers and school administrators have an interest in virtually all policies that are developed. If the focus of the policy is quite narrow, these might be the only groups involved. If the focus is broader, community members, agencies or groups may also be identified as stakeholders.
- 2. Form a working group.** In most cases, a small working group made up of one or two board members, a central office staff member or principal, a teacher, a parent, and one or two students, lead the development of school division policies. A community representative might be included as well.
- 3. Explain the need for a policy and ask for input.** It is important to inform stakeholders about the need for a particular policy and request their input. To gather input, you might:
 - explain the policy and ask for input at school staff meetings, meetings of school level organizations or meetings of local community groups;
 - put information on the school division's website and structure the website so that community members can enter their comments; or,
 - put a notice in school newsletters with a tear-off form for comments that can be returned to the school division.



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Policy Development Steps:

The following general steps for developing board policy can be applied to the development of policy regarding parent and community involvement and partnerships:

- 1. Identify the stakeholders.** Include key stakeholder groups in the development of policies that affect them and in policies that are potentially controversial. Who the stakeholders are depends on the nature of the policy being developed. Students, parents, teachers and school administrators have an interest in virtually all policies that are developed. If the focus of the policy is quite narrow, these might be the only groups involved. If the focus is broader, community members, agencies or groups may also be identified as stakeholders.
- 2. Form a working group.** In most cases, a small working group made up of one or two board members, a central office staff member or principal, a teacher, a parent, and one or two students, lead the development of school division policies. A community representative might be included as well.
- 3. Explain the need for a policy and ask for input.** It is important to inform stakeholders about the need for a particular policy and request their input. To gather input, you might:
 - explain the policy and ask for input at school staff meetings, meetings of school level organizations or meetings of local community groups;
 - put information on the school division's website and structure the website so that community members can enter their comments; or,
 - put a notice in school newsletters with a tear-off form for comments that can be returned to the school division.

During this process, listen carefully to the concerns and issues expressed by students, parents, teachers and other stakeholder groups. Record these concerns in writing, if appropriate.

4. Obtain information about policies developed by other boards of education. Many school division policies have been posted on the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association's website (www.ssta.sk.ca). As well, some examples of Saskatchewan board policies around parent and community involvement appear in Section C. It might also be appropriate to call neighbouring divisions to find out what they have done.

5. Write a draft(s) of the policy. One or two persons usually do the actual writing of the policy. It may be possible, with permission, to use parts of existing policies. Distributing the drafts to stakeholders for comments not only improves the quality of the drafts, but more importantly increases the sense of ownership of and commitment to the policy among those who are affected by it.

6. Finalize the policy. Write the final draft incorporating comments and suggestions made in response to previous drafts and proceed with formal adoption of the policy.

7. Develop implementation strategies. Consider what methods would best communicate the policy and which resources are needed to support implementation of the policy.

(Adapted from *Policy Leadership*, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1999).

The following worksheet can be used to begin discussions about what steps to take in the development of a policy for parent and community involvement and partnerships.

Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships Policy Development Worksheet

1. Is there a need for parent involvement and partnerships in your school or school division?
2. Who are the individuals and groups in your community that would have an interest in establishing parent involvement and partnerships?
3. How would you get input from the various individuals and groups in your community?
4. What individual or group would review the drafts of your policy?
5. How would you involve trustees, administrative and school staff?
6. How would you keep participants informed of feedback received from individuals and groups?
7. How would you use the process of developing a parent involvement or partnership policy to educate students, teachers, parents and community members, as well as to get their input concerning the policy?
8. What aspect of your plan might need to be adapted as you proceed with the development of the parent involvement or partnership policy?
9. What is the first thing you would do after the final version of the parent involvement or partnership policy was formally adopted by the board?

(Adapted from Lyons, Robbins, & Smith, 1983)

Reviewing Policy:

It is important to regularly review policies to ensure that they continue to support parent and community involvement and partnerships. Some questions you might consider in reviewing your existing policies include:

1. Does your policy development process involve:
 - parents?
 - teachers?
 - students?
 - community members?
2. Do any of your policies or parts of policies inhibit active parent and community partnerships?
3. Do your policies support effective mechanisms for:
 - two-way communication?
 - involving parent and community members in helping children learn at home and in the community?
 - involving parents in volunteer and advisory roles?
 - partnerships and collaboration?



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 - involving parents in volunteer and advisory roles?
 - partnerships and collaboration?

- parent and community participation in governance and decision-making roles?
4. Do you have a code of ethics for:
- parents?
 - volunteers?
 - staff?
 - trustees?

Communication

Effective communication among the board of education and school level organizations, as well as individual parents and community members is a critical part of forming and maintaining strong parent and community partnerships in education.

Effective communication provides parents with accurate and timely information about school division policies and programs. As well, it provides effective opportunities for parents, community members and school level organizations to have access to the board to provide advice, seek clarification and resolve conflict (see Section C-6 for sample policies on communications from the Regina Public and Saskatoon Public School Divisions). There are a number of ways boards can facilitate communication, including:

- newsletters and mailings explaining board policies and programs;
- parent opinion surveys;
- representatives of the board attending school level organization meetings several times per year to provide information and receive feedback;
- annual or biennial meetings where representatives of school level organizations can meet with board members;
- standing parent/community advisory committees;
- public meetings;
- phone messaging systems and telephone trees;
- an interactive website; and,
- involving parents and community members in board committees.

Shared Responsibility Beyond Advisory Functions

In a number of school divisions across the province, boards have negotiated roles with school level organizations that go beyond advisory roles. Generally, there are three possible levels or types of shared management or governance of education. These are:

1. Project and Program Management within a School. This is where a school and board of education form a partnership with another entity such as a First Nation or Métis organization or a school level organization to share in the implementation of a specific program or project. The School-to-Work project at Scott Collegiate in Regina is an example of this type of partnership, involving the board of education for the Regina Public School Division; File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council; the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations; and, the federal government.

2. Shared Management or Shared Governance of a School or Schools. In this type of arrangement the board of education shares the management or governance of a school and its programs with a parent and community group or organization. Shared management and decision making can include a broad range of responsibilities from determining policies and programs, setting school goals and priorities, to managing the budget and staffing duties. Shared management agreements vary from one school to another depending on local circumstances. The Agreement that has been established between the Flying Dust First Nation and the Meadow Lake Board of Education is an example of shared management of a number of schools.

3. Participation on the Board of Education or District Board of Trustees. Parents and community members have the option to seek election on the board of education in their community. The existing legislation provides for First Nations' representation on the board, where tuition agreements are in place. In rural school divisions, elections are also held for district boards of trustees (local boards).

Guidelines for Shared Management Arrangements:

- 1. A statement of the principles** upon which the agreement is based. Examples include:
 - students are the focus of all efforts and their success is the most important goal;
 - the education of children and young people is a shared responsibility among the school, the family and the community; and,
 - Parent and community partnerships strengthen the education program and contribute to student success.
- 2. A clear description of the responsibilities** of the board of education and of the school council or other organization.
- 3. A mediation clause** that provides for the resolution of disputes between the two parties. This clause might specify a process to be followed such as outlining the steps of interest-based negotiation or it might specify how a mediator will be chosen.



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4. A **review clause** that allows for review of the shared management agreement. It may be appropriate to renegotiate the agreement as circumstances change. The clause might provide for regular review or describe the circumstances under which the agreement could be revisited.
5. A **dissolution clause** which would terminate the agreement.
6. A **work plan and time frame** for implementing shared management. Some school communities might want to enter fully into shared management during the first year of an agreement. Others might prefer a phased-in approach.

Roles and Responsibilities

Formal roles and responsibilities for boards of education, district boards of trustees, conseils d'écoles and local school advisory committees are outlined in *The Education Act, 1995*. Boards may encourage the establishment of school level organizations and may delegate mutually agreed upon responsibilities to such organizations. In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Act, boards of education can do the following to strengthen parent and community partnerships:

- ensure inservice opportunities for principals, teachers and other school staff;
- recognize that parent and community partnerships are critical to the success of students and responsiveness in the learning program;
- develop system-wide policies and supports, promoting and facilitating parent and community involvement and partnerships;
- develop policy and guidelines for parent and community involvement and partnership activities and structures, including clearly defined statements of purpose, roles, responsibilities and authority;
- establish conflict resolution mechanisms and appeal procedures;
- provide information in a timely manner to family and community members to facilitate their effective participation and decision making; and,
- when necessary, negotiate with parent and community organizations and district boards or conseils d'écoles to permit shared responsibilities and authorities beyond advisory functions.

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School Division Administration

Depending on the size of your school division, the responsibilities of the administrative staff may be structured in a number of ways. In small school divisions, the director may take full responsibility for the educational program while other school divisions may have assistant directors, superintendents and consultants.

The school division administration supports the board in fulfilling its roles and has an important responsibility in supporting the development of successful parent and community partnerships in education. Working closely with schools, the school division staff:

- carry out a number of activities to support parent and community involvement and partnerships, including:
 - publicly promoting parent and community involvement and partnerships (e.g., division-wide newsletters, letters to parents, posting information on the school division's website),
 - sharing information among parents, school staff and schools, and
 - developing recruitment and recognition strategies and programs;
- develop training and workshop opportunities and support materials for parents and community members on topics, such as:
 - communication skills,
 - group processes,
 - how to chair a meeting,
 - how to prepare minutes,
 - creative problem solving,
 - needs assessment, and
 - conflict resolution;
- ensure the effective functioning of school level organizations, such as local school advisory committees, parent councils and district boards of trustees.

Additional Resources and Information

- **School Board Policies Regarding Parents.** The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA) greatly appreciates the generous cooperation of a number of school boards for making sample policies available online at:
http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/parent_involvement/sbp_par.htm

- **Policy Development.** John Carver has developed a model and theory of policy governance for boards. He has authored several books on policy development. Titles of his books and a brief overview of his model of governance is available online at:
<http://www.carvergovernance.com/>
- For additional resources and information refer to page II-27.

IV. Materials and Resources

IV. Materials and Resources

The following pages include ready-to-use handouts and workshop plans for use with a variety of groups. You may wish to copy certain pages or sections and distribute them directly to board members, school staff, parents or community members.

This section is intended to give you ideas that may be adapted to your school and community needs.

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Sample Workshop Plans

Section A



Building Awareness Workshop

Objectives:

- To build awareness and understanding among parents, teachers, trustees and community members on the benefits of parent and community partnerships with the school.
- To identify a wide range of ways for parents and community members to become involved in the school.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: flipchart paper, markers, tape

Participants: parents, students, school staff, trustees, community members

Process:

Introduction

- Indicate that the purpose of this workshop is to identify the benefits of parent and community partnerships with the school, as well as to discuss ways to increase involvement.
- Indicate that this workshop is the first of three workshops.
 - 1st Workshop – *Building Awareness*
 - 2nd Workshop – *Assessment Planning*
 - 3rd Workshop – *Creating the School Plan*

Task 1

1. Divide into groups of 4-6 people. Indicate to each group which of the 5 education stakeholder groups they will be representing. The 5 groups are:
 - Group 1 – Students
 - Group 2 – Parents
 - Group 3 – Teachers
 - Group 4 – School
 - Group 5 – Community

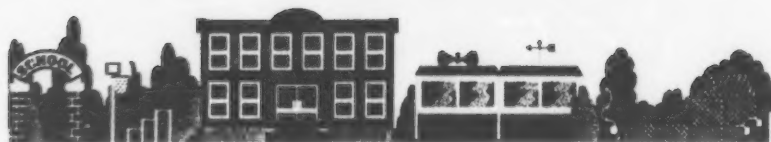
2. Ask each group to choose a recorder and a reporter. Provide flipchart paper, markers and tape.
3. The task for each group is to brainstorm the benefits of having stronger school, parent and community partnerships. Remind participants that the benefits they identify are to be from the point of view of the particular stakeholder group they have been assigned. Ask each group to record their ideas on the flipchart paper.
4. After approximately 10 minutes of discussion, ask the reporters of each group to report what benefits their group has identified. Post the flipchart paper on a wall.
5. To sum up the discussion on the benefits of increased parent and community partnerships with the school, review B-1 *The Benefits of Parent and Community Involvement to Students, Parents, Teachers, Schools, and Community* (use as a handout or use as an overhead).

Task 2

1. Using the same groups set up in Task 1, supply each group with additional flipchart paper.
2. The task for each group is to brainstorm ways in which parents and community members can become more involved with the school. Indicate that groups no longer have to represent a particular stakeholder group but may if they so choose. Ask each group to record all of their ideas on the flipchart paper and identify their top 5 ideas.
3. After approximately 10 minutes of discussion, ask the reporters of each group to report the top 5 ideas their group has identified. Post the flipchart paper on a wall.

Wrap up

- Indicate that the workshop facilitator will take all the ideas (benefits of and ideas for involvement) generated at this meeting and write them up for use at the next workshop. The next workshop is the *Assessment Workshop*.
- Thank everyone for participating. Provide beverages and snacks. Encourage further dialogue and viewing of the posted flipchart paper.



Assessment Workshop

Objective:

- To take stock of where parents, school staff and community members are in the development of partnerships.

Time: 1-2 hours

Materials: surveys, pens

Participants: parents, students, school staff, community members

Process:

Introduction

- Indicate that the purpose of this workshop is to determine the nature and level of partnerships among parents, community members and the school.
- Review the outcome of the *Building Awareness Workshop* and handout the list of ideas (benefits of and ideas for involvement) compiled by the workshop facilitator.
- There are two surveys that are useful in assessing parent and community partnerships with the school. Choose Option 1 or Option 2 and proceed with the workshop.

Option 1

1. Divide into groups of 4-6 people. Indicate that each group will be asked to complete a section of B-2 *Parent and Community Partnerships in Education Survey*.
Group 1 – Program and Instruction
Group 2 – Resources
Group 3 – Personnel
Group 4 – Organizational Development
Group 5 – Communication
2. Ask each group to choose a recorder and a reporter. Provide copies of the appropriate section of the survey and pens.

3. The task for each group is to complete, as a group, their assigned section of the survey. Encourage each group to include comments with their responses.
4. After approximately 15 minutes of discussion, ask the reporters of each group to report their group's findings. Hand in the surveys to the facilitator.

Option 2

1. Divide into groups of 4-6 people. Indicate that each group will be asked to complete a section of B-3 *Parent and Community Partnership Inventory*.
Group 1 – Teacher/Coach
Group 2 – Supporter/Volunteer
Group 3 – Communicator
Group 4 – Learner
Group 5 – Audience
Group 6 – Advocate/Decision Maker
Group 7 – Home/School/Community Partnerships
2. Ask each group to choose a recorder and a reporter. Provide copies of the appropriate section of the survey and pens.
3. The task for each group is to complete, as a group, their assigned section of the survey. Encourage each group to include comments with their responses.
4. After approximately 20 minutes of discussion, ask the reporters of each group to report their group's findings. Hand in the surveys to the facilitator.

Wrap up

- Indicate that the workshop facilitator will take all the surveys and compile the responses (including comments) into a report for use at the next workshop. The next workshop is the *Creating the School Plan Workshop*.
- Handout B-6 *50 Ways Parents Can Help Schools* and B-14 *Examples of Commitments that all Members of a School Community can Make* to participants to take home.
- Thank everyone for participating. Provide beverages and snacks. Encourage further dialogue.
- The facilitator may want to consider distributing one or both of the surveys to other members of the school community.



Creating the School Plan Workshop

Objective:

- To involve school administrators, school staff, students, parents and the community in setting priorities and planning the enhancement of parent and community involvement in the school.

Time: 2-3 hours

Materials: 8½x11 paper (in as many color variations as there are groups), pens, tape, overhead projector, screen, overhead markers

Participants: parents, students, school staff, community members, administrators

Process:

Introduction

- Indicate that the purpose of this workshop is to set priorities and develop a plan to increase parent and community involvement in the school.
- Review the outcome of the *Building Awareness Workshop* (benefits of and ideas for parent and community involvement) and review the outcome of the *Assessment Workshop* (responses to survey).

Task 1

1. Divide into groups of 4-6 people.
2. Ask each group to choose a recorder and a reporter. Provide paper, pens and tape.
3. The task for each group is to identify and rank (in order of importance) 5 areas of parent and community involvement that would most benefit the school as a whole and students in particular. Some examples include:
 - better communication between volunteers and school staff;
 - increased parent involvement in the classroom; and,

- more effective means of communicating the availability of opportunities for parents and community members to become involved.

Ask each group to record their ideas on the paper (one idea per page). Each piece of paper should indicate one idea and its ranking (1 through 5).

4. After approximately 15 minutes of discussion, ask the reporters of each group to report what areas their group has identified. Post the pieces of paper (in descending order) for each group on a wall.
5. Collectively review the areas identified by each group, look for commonalities and reach a consensus as to the 5 priority areas of parent and community involvement in the school.

Task 2

1. As a group, brainstorm ideas, specific actions that help achieve each of the 5 priority areas of parent and community involvement in the school. Record these actions on an overhead. It may be useful to incorporate B-7 *Developing Outreach Strategies* and B-10 *Sample Parent Interest Survey*.

Wrap up

- Indicate that the workshop facilitator will prepare a School Plan that includes the 5 priority areas of parent and community involvement in the school, and the suggested actions about how this involvement can be attained. Ask participants to suggest some ways to communicate the School Plan effectively to the entire school and its community (e.g., school newsletter, post on school bulletin board).
- Thank everyone for participating. Provide beverages and snacks. Encourage further dialogue.



Executive Leadership Plan Workshop

Objectives:

- To understand roles and responsibilities.
- To discover and value the strengths present in the executive members of the school level organization.
- To develop a plan for executive development of the school level organization.
- To develop a plan for personal improvement as a member of the school level organization.

Time: 1-2 hours

Materials: flipchart paper, markers, tape,

Participants: school level organization executive members

Process:

Introduction

- Indicate that the purpose of this workshop is to understand roles and responsibilities, identify individual strengths, and develop plans for professional development as an organization and as individuals.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the school level organization executive. Refer to the section in this document on roles and responsibilities (Page II-22).

Task 1

1. Ask participants to identify key skills and abilities needed by this school level organization. Record responses on flipchart paper and post on a wall.
2. Identify which key skills and abilities each executive member needs and which are needed by the organization as a whole.

Task 2

1. Ask each participant to identify 3-5 strengths that they believe they bring to this school level organization (e.g., organizational skills, skilled mediator, etc.).

Task 3

1. Referring to the flipchart paper on the wall, ask the participants to determine 2-3 areas for professional growth for the school level organization. Have participants suggest ways these might be achieved.

Task 4

1. Ask participants to review their personal list of strengths and the key skills and abilities identified in Task 1. The task for each participant is to identify 2-3 areas for personal improvement. Have participants suggest ways these might be achieved and identify possible resources (e.g., community members who can help out, etc.)
2. After about 15 minutes, ask for volunteers to share with the group their personal plan for executive development.

Wrap up

- From the above exercises, participants will be able to identify where they can seek support from other executive members.
- Encourage participants to follow through on their personal plan for executive development and to support each other (e.g., ask another executive member for assistance).
- Discuss training options for those skills and abilities that most of the executive members need to improve upon (e.g., approach community members to provide training).
- Summarize the proposed plan for executive leadership development for the school level organization.
- Perhaps a follow up workshop or meeting could be scheduled to revisit school level organization plans and personal plans to acknowledge progress and work on skills.
- Thank everyone for participating. Provide beverages and snacks. Encourage further dialogue.

Parent and Community Partnerships

Section B

The Benefits of Parent and Community Involvement to Students, Parents, Teachers, Schools and Community

B-1

Student Benefits

- improved academic achievement (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996; Comer, 1984; Epstein, 1988; Human Resources Development Canada, 1994; Kagan, 1984; Snodgrass, 1991; Stevenson & Baker, 1989);
- enhanced student success in school (Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1994; Sullivan, 1997);
- higher graduation rates (Henderson & Berla, 1994);
- improved attitudes and behaviour, and increased involvement in classroom learning activities (Christenson & Cleary, 1990; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Human Resources Development Canada, 1994);
- increased completion of and more positive attitudes toward homework (Christenson & Cleary, 1990; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Tangri & Moles, 1987);
- higher attendance rates and reduced suspension rates (Christenson & Cleary, 1990; Henderson & Berla, 1994);
- greater enrolment in post-secondary education (Henderson & Berla, 1994); and,
- mentoring programs with community members improve student behavioural and academic performance (Guetzloe, 1997; Miller, 1997).

Parent Benefits

- increased understanding that parents are the primary influences in their children's education (Galen, 1991; Smrekar, 1996);
- increased understanding of the work of schools (Christenson & Cleary, 1990);
- improved communication between parents and their children, and parents and teachers (Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1994; Christenson & Cleary, 1990);
- increased involvement of parents in learning activities at home (Christenson & Cleary, 1990);
- encouragement for some parents to return to school to finish their own education (Johnson, 1991); and,
- enhanced parents' attitudes about themselves (Smrekar, 1996).

When parents are involved at school, not just at home, children do better in school and they stay in school longer. What parents do at home to support learning has a strong, independent effect on children's achievement.

(Henderson & Berla, 1994)

Through being involved in schools, parents develop a greater appreciation of the important role they play in their children's education, a sense of adequacy and self-worth, strengthened social networks, and motivation to resume their own education.

(Davies, 1988)

Not only do parents become more effective as parents, but they become more effective as people. It's a matter of higher self-esteem. Once they saw they could do something about their children's education, they saw they could do something about their housing, their community and their jobs.

(Amundson, 1988)

Common patterns among schools suggest that community involvement contributes to improvements in: the physical conditions, resources and constituencies that support learning; the attitudes and expectations of parents, teachers, and students; and, the depth and quality of the learning experiences in which parents, teachers and students participate.

Hatch, 1998)

When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in synergistic ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own: families access community resources more easily; businesses connect educational programs with the realities of the workplace; seniors contribute wisdom and gain a greater sense of purpose; and, students serve and learn beyond their school involvement.

White, 1998)

Teacher Benefits

- increased parental satisfaction with teachers' skills (Christenson & Cleary, 1990; Smrekar, 1996);
- greater job satisfaction and fewer requests for transfers (Christenson & Cleary, 1990);
- increased opportunities for staff to spend time on important instructional tasks rather than on behaviour problems (Johnson, 1991);
- increased understanding of the culture of the school and community (Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1994; Johnson, 1991); and,
- increased resources for professional development opportunities through community involvement (Hatch, 1998).

School Benefits

- increased effectiveness of schools (Christenson & Cleary, 1990; Slavin, Karweit & Madden, 1989);
- improved school climate through positive community involvement and partnerships (Cromarty, 1997);
- enhanced home-school relationships, especially in positive, proactive ways (Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1994; Christenson & Cleary, 1990);
- increased availability of expertise and information to the school at no extra cost (Hatch, 1998; Wilson & Rossman, 1986); and,
- increased parent and community support of the school (Smith, 1998; Smrekar, 1996; Wilson & Rossman, 1986).

Community Benefits

- increased cost-effectiveness – when services and facilities are pooled, money and people's time are directed toward a common goal;
- skills building – when parents and community members are involved in school activities, they have opportunities to develop their own skills;
- enhanced knowledge of and belief in the power of a community's ability to organize and achieve (Hatch, 1998); and,
- strengthened community identity and pride – accomplishment at the school level builds pride. That pride, in turn, spreads throughout the community (McLaughlin, 1993).

Parent and Community Partnerships in Education Survey

B-2

"What can we do?" is a question frequently asked. The following list is intended to encourage discussion regarding the role of parents and the community in supporting the education program.

On a scale of one to five, indicate the "actual" and "desired" involvement of parents and the community in your school in determining:

Actual (Present)	Desired (Ideal)
---------------------	--------------------

low involvement 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 high involvement

Program and Instruction:

1. ☐ ☐ What is taught in the curricular program.
2. ☐ ☐ Activities that are included in the extra-curricular program.
3. ☐ ☐ Volunteer, apprenticeship and mentoring programs.
4. ☐ ☐ Expectations for the evaluation and reporting of student progress.
5. ☐ ☐ Local options (language of instruction, family life/sex education and religious instruction).
6. ☐ ☐ The assessing of how well school programs are doing in achieving student learning.

Resources:

7. ☐ ☐ Strategies for fundraising.
8. ☐ ☐ Resource requirements, priorities and budget allocations.
9. ☐ ☐ Student transportation system.
10. ☐ ☐ Public use of school facilities.
11. ☐ ☐ Allocating learning time during the school day and year.
12. ☐ ☐ Facility and maintenance needs.
13. ☐ ☐ The supervision of children.
14. ☐ ☐ Interagency programs to meet student and family needs.
15. ☐ ☐ Use of textbooks and other resources.

Personnel:

16. ☐ ☐ Overall staffing needs for the school.
17. ☐ ☐ Selection of school administration.
18. ☐ ☐ Selection of professional staff.
19. ☐ ☐ Selection of support staff.
20. ☐ ☐ The performance appraisal of school administration.

- 21. ☐ ☐ The performance appraisal of professional staff.
- 22. ☐ ☐ The performance appraisal of support staff.

Organizational Development:

- 23. ☐ ☐ The school mission, philosophy and goals.
- 24. ☐ ☐ Standards for general expectations, student dress and behaviour.
- 25. ☐ ☐ Expectations of parents and the community in building a learning community.
- 26. ☐ ☐ The assessment of outcomes of school improvement efforts.
- 27. ☐ ☐ The relevance and effectiveness of school policies and procedures.
- 28. ☐ ☐ Support and counsel for the school principal.
- 29. ☐ ☐ Public perceptions regarding the school and school system.

Communication:

- 30. ☐ ☐ Strategies for improving communication with school staff.
- 31. ☐ ☐ Strategies for improving communication with parents and the public.
- 32. ☐ ☐ Strategies for improving communication with the division board.
- 33. ☐ ☐ Strategies for resolving disputes between parents and school staff.
- 34. ☐ ☐ Strategies for school public relations.
- 35. ☐ ☐ Opportunities for information and study sessions regarding changes in education.

(Adapted from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1994)

Parent and Community Partnership Inventory

B-3

The following inventory can help to determine strategies for increasing family and community partnerships. It can be duplicated and circulated to your school community.

Check One:

- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Other (specify: _____)

Instruction: Please consider each statement carefully. Check each box that applies throughout your school.

I. TEACHER/COACH - Supporting the learning process

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

1. Parents are informed of homework policy by:

- ☐ Handbook
- ☐ Parent orientation
- ☐ Homework calendar
- ☐ Assignment notebook
- ☐ Special information sheet
- ☐ Homework Hotline
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Teacher contract
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

2. Parents are given specific ways to monitor homework by:

- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Parent-teacher conferences
- ☐ Interactive homework
- ☐ Special information sheet
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

3. Parents are provided with material or easy access to materials to assist parents as teachers by:

- ☐ Parent library/reading room
- ☐ Parent tip sheets
- ☐ Daily activity calendar
- ☐ Parent inservice
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

4. **Parents are provided with information about libraries, book clubs and other educational opportunities for their children by:**
- ☐ Teacher contact
 - ☐ Informational brochures
 - ☐ Newsletters
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____
5. **Parents are provided with opportunities to learn about:**
- ☐ Techniques for creating a home learning environment
 - ☐ Helping your child with school
 - ☐ English literacy
 - ☐ GED
 - ☐ Computer literacy
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____
6. **Parents are informed when children are truant or absent:**
- ☐ Within one hour of school beginning
 - ☐ During the same school day
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____
7. **The person who informs a parent of a child's truancy is usually the:**
- ☐ Principal
 - ☐ Secretary
 - ☐ Truant officer
 - ☐ Classroom teacher
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____
8. **Parent-teacher-student conferences are held for every student:**
- ☐ Once a year
 - ☐ Twice a year
 - ☐ Quarterly
 - ☐ As needed
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____

9. **The time scheduled for parent-teacher-student conferences is during:**
- ☐ Regular school hours
 - ☐ Evening hours
 - ☐ Other (specify)_____
10. **Parents new to the school and/or community receive some special orientation by:**
- ☐ Community Association brochure
 - ☐ Orientation meeting held at the school
 - ☐ Other (specify)_____
11. **School personnel are easily accessible to all parents:**
- ☐ During prep time
 - ☐ After school
 - ☐ Before school
 - ☐ By appointment
 - ☐ Other (specify)_____
12. **The following projects and activities are provided to reinforce classroom work:**
- ☐ Student and parent information sessions
 - ☐ Science fairs/Invention convention
 - ☐ History fairs
 - ☐ Home learning packets to reinforce classroom learning
 - ☐ Young Authors
 - ☐ TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents in School Work)
 - ☐ Family math
 - ☐ Family science
 - ☐ Family/home reading
 - ☐ Interactive homework assignments
 - ☐ Other (specify)_____
13. **Parents are notified immediately when their child is having academic difficulty by:**
- ☐ Written progress report
 - ☐ Individual student progress conferences
 - ☐ Telephone conferences
 - ☐ Notes in student agendas
 - ☐ Team meetings with parents
 - ☐ Other (specify)_____

14. **Specific suggestions are given to parents in order to address their child's academic difficulties by:**

- ☐ Written progress report
- ☐ Individual student progress conferences
- ☐ Telephone conferences
- ☐ Student-teacher-parent contracts
- ☐ Team meetings with parents
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

15. **The school provides information to parents on how to support the learning process. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)**

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

II. SUPPORTER/VOLUNTEER

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

16. **The school has solicited volunteers from:**

- ☐ Parents/Families
- ☐ Community members
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Service organizations
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

17. **Parents are solicited to volunteer in some way during the year by:**

- ☐ Survey
- ☐ Group meetings
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Parent orientation
- ☐ Personal contact
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

18. **Volunteer efforts are coordinated by the:**

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Paid position
- ☐ School Level Organization
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

19. Volunteers receive the following supports:

- ☐ Orientation
- ☐ Guidelines/Handbook
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Effectiveness is monitored
- ☐ Volunteers receive feedback
- ☐ All who volunteer are utilized in some way
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

20. Volunteers are recognized and/or rewarded for their contributions by:

- ☐ On going recognition (e.g., notes, verbal praise)
- ☐ Yearly recognition event
- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

21. The school has provided the following parent volunteer opportunities:

- ☐ Committee member (e.g., strategic planning)
- ☐ Field trips
- ☐ Library aides
- ☐ Computer aides
- ☐ Office help
- ☐ Activity sponsor
- ☐ Monitoring events
- ☐ Special events
- ☐ Social activities
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Communications (e.g., newsletter)
- ☐ Book fairs
- ☐ Special skills
- ☐ Teacher assistant
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ School store
- ☐ Friend/mentor
- ☐ Extended Day Program
- ☐ Tutor
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

24. The school provides interpreters for non-English speaking parents who speak:

- ☐ Cree
- ☐ Saulteaux
- ☐ Dene
- ☐ Michif
- ☐ French
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

25. Non-custodial parents are kept informed:

- ☐ The same as the custodial parent
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Other (specify) _____
- ☐ Not at all

26. The school makes every effort to communicate with parents who are non-readers through:

- ☐ Home visits
- ☐ Phone calls/Messaging
- ☐ Audio tapes
- ☐ Video tapes
- ☐ Cable TV
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

27. The school communicates regularly with social agencies and other community service groups:

- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Other (specify) _____
- ☐ Never

28. The school utilizes the following media sources:

- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ School/Community Sign
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Cable TV
- ☐ Local TV
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

29. School events are scheduled to accommodate all parents and are held during:

- ☐ Evenings
- ☐ Weekends
- ☐ Before school
- ☐ During school
- ☐ After school
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

30. The school and parent are engaged in frequent, clear two-way communication. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

IV. LEARNER

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

31. The school provides:

- ☐ Parent information nights
- ☐ GED classes at the school
- ☐ A variety of parenting education classes (e.g., drug and alcohol awareness, building self-esteem, nutrition, parent/child communication, etc.)
- ☐ Parent centre/room
- ☐ Family literacy activities
- ☐ Vocational counselling/skills (e.g., completing job applications, writing a resume, job interview techniques, re-entering the work force)
- ☐ Study skills and how to help with homework
- ☐ Skills development opportunities for parents (e.g., stress management, time management, computer literacy)
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

32. The school provides inservice for teachers on:

- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Teambuilding
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Parent involvement
- ☐ Respecting student diversity
- ☐ Discipline/classroom management
- ☐ Conflict management
- ☐ Creating a positive and equitable learning environment
- ☐ Case management/Integrated services
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

33. Classes and workshops provided are co-presented by teachers and parents.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

34. Classes and workshops are offered at sites other than at school.

- ☐ Community Centre/Hall
- ☐ Church
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

35. The school provides consistent opportunities for parents to improve their skills and broaden their knowledge base. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

V. AUDIENCE

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

- 36. The school provides all students with an opportunity to perform for parents (e.g., holiday programs, musicals, concerts, fairs, intramural sports events, etc.):**

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Other (specify) _____
- ☐ Never

- 37. The school provides groups of students the opportunity to participate in the following activities for parent audiences:**

- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Music events
- ☐ Talent nights
- ☐ Art events/cultural events
- ☐ Academic skill events (e.g., science fairs, spelling bees, public speaking)
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

- 38. The school/school division provides parents the opportunity to observe student work/projects displayed in the community:**

- ☐ 3-4 times a year
- ☐ 1-2 times a year
- ☐ Other (specify) _____
- ☐ Never

- 39. The school provides all parents with regular opportunities to observe their children in skill and talent demonstrations. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)**

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

VI. ADVOCATE/DECISION MAKER

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

- 40. Does the school have a policy or process to ensure that parents are partners in decision making?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 41. Parents have an equal opportunity to serve on fundraising, school spirit, special events, or other types of committees:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 42. Parents have an opportunity for input on policy development through:**

- ☐ Written survey
- ☐ District committee
- ☐ School committee
- ☐ School level organization
- ☐ Suggestion box
- ☐ Informal comments to teachers or principal
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

- 43. Parents have easy access to school policies:**

- ☐ Policies are posted in a prominent location within the school
- ☐ Materials are readily available in the school office
- ☐ All parents are provided with a copy of school policies
- ☐ Other (specify) _____
- ☐ Policies are not readily available to parents

- 44. Parents provide input through a school level organization to the school administration on issues affecting their children:**

- ☐ On a regular basis
- ☐ Infrequently
- ☐ Not at all

45. Parents are asked for help in resolving problems that face the school (e.g., vandalism, increased truancy, parking problems) through:

- ☐ Written survey
- ☐ School level organization
- ☐ Suggestion box
- ☐ Informal comments to teachers or principal
- ☐ Committee participation
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

46. Parents are invited to be members of school level organizations:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

47. The school schedules committee meetings at a variety of times to accommodate participation by all interested parents:

- ☐ Evenings
- ☐ Weekends
- ☐ Before school
- ☐ During school
- ☐ After school
- ☐ Noon hours
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

48. The school provides parents with regular opportunities to serve on school committees or groups involved in problem solving and decision making. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

VII. HOME/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Instructions:

For each question, check all that apply.

- 49. The school provides or coordinates supports for families and children who have diverse needs:**

- ☐ Prevention and early intervention
- ☐ Social, emotional, wellness supports
- ☐ Counselling
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

- 50. Community service opportunities are provided for students:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 51. Community members/organizations share their knowledge, and skills (e.g., career days, mentorship, job shadowing) with the school:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 52. Other departments such as Health/Social Services share facilities with the school:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 53. Youth service agencies share facilities and/or services with the school:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 54. The school has a written policy on parent partnerships:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- 55. Teachers receive inservice on effective communications and parent involvement and partnerships:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

56. The administration provides time for teachers to collaborate with parents and community agencies during school time:
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
57. The principal serves as a parent advocate:
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
58. Staff meeting time is devoted to discussing ways to improve or increase parent involvement and partnerships:
- ☐ Frequently
 - ☐ Occasionally
 - ☐ Never
59. The school provides child-care and transportation for school events and/or conferences:
- ☐ Regularly
 - ☐ Seldom
 - ☐ Never
60. The school climate is friendly and welcoming to parents (and other visitors):
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
61. Parents have a comfortable place to meet and work at the school site:
- ☐ Separate room
 - ☐ Share teachers' lounge
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____
62. Parent and community partnerships are assessed on a regular basis through:
- ☐ Surveys
 - ☐ Interviews
 - ☐ Focus groups
 - ☐ Discussions at regular meetings
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____

63. Parents and community representatives participate in developing and renewing the school's vision:

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Never

64. Community service projects are considered on a regular basis:

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Not at all

65. Parents sit on an interagency council for coordinating health, education and social activities:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

66. The school provides a positive climate for home, school and community partnerships. (Rate your school on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Circle your rating.)

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

Adapted from:
Parent Involvement Inventory (1994)
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ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001



Sample Newsletters for Parents

Get Involved . . . in Learning with Your Child

Getting Involved at School

Monday – Hot Dog Day. Dad serves in the school gym at noon.

Wednesday – Grandma's Easter egg painting demo to Peter's class, 10:00 a.m.

Thursday – Parent Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m.- school library. Mom attends.

This is what a family schedule may include when parents and other relatives are involved at their children's school. In addition to their main function as centres for education, schools are community centres inviting family participation.

You give your children the message that education is vital when you become a school volunteer. Adult family members available during the school day can tutor students, re-shelve library books or help in the computer lab. Those who work regular hours can help build playground equipment on weekends, maintain the skating rink in the evening or supervise a weekend camping trip. Ask staff for suggestions about ways to help.

Participate in the school's parent advisory council, or join a parent-teacher organization. Attend Home and School meetings. These are opportunities to help make decisions about the school.

Even if you are only able to volunteer on one occasion for an hour, your help is welcome. All forms of involvement benefit students.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

Wants or Needs – Ensuring the Basics

Everyone has a curfew later than mine! Can I get some new Brand “X” runners? I want to go to the movie with my friends this weekend.

All kids have wants and they're endless. But what are their real needs and how can parents meet them?

Children need a home where they are protected and feel safe. Parents must ensure that kids get necessary medical attention and gain the knowledge they need to help protect themselves.

Children need nutritious meals in harmony with *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. You can get copies at your Health District office. Mealtime gives you opportunities to listen, to show interest in childrens' activities. Conversations should be fun, with positive messages to build self-esteem.

Children need to get enough rest, to have clean clothes suited to the weather and a space for homework and other quiet activities. They also need time to play and entertain friends.

Children need your attention and love. Hug them! Compliment them! Help them set goals. Give them responsibilities. Set reasonable limits for their behaviour, too. That's another way to show you care.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

Encouraging Math at Home

Parents need to encourage both daughters and sons to develop math skills. Girls are equally capable in math but are more likely to believe it's a guy thing. To have more choices in their adult lives, girls must throw out that math myth. In fact, most of us need to approach math as fun and do-able, rather than difficult and frightening.

Parents can start early in a child's life to play with mathematical ideas. Math games place math in the real world. Your home is full of objects to count, sort, combine and measure. What youngster could resist this invitation?

See how many cups of water you can pour into that empty milk carton. Children can help plan the week's grocery list. An older child can estimate the amount of dog crumbles needed. If McSniff eats two cups a day. How many cups in a small bag? In a big bag? Would the big one save money?

Children can relate time and distance. *What time should the family leave Nipawin to arrive in Davidson in time for Uncle Chuck's barbecue supper? Looking at a map, which is the shortest route to take?*

Bring out cards and coins, and invent amusing games to help your children learn to love math.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

***Communicate with
Your Child's School***

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

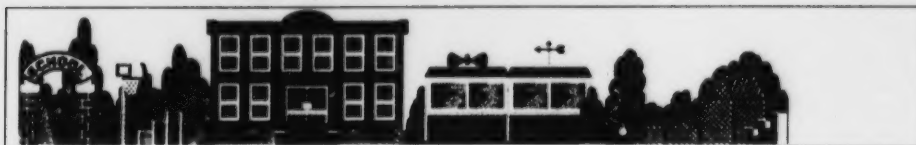
Ms. Popkins,

Tomorrow, Thursday, April 11, I will take Brad to the doctor. He needs further tests for his diabetes so he will miss classes for the entire day. I'll be in touch with you about the results. Please send work home with his friend, Kevin Greyeyes.

*Thanks,
Jeffrey Beally*

Brad's dad is ensuring that his son's teacher and the school know why Brad will be absent from class. This father also plans to talk to the teacher about the results of Brad's medical tests, to give the school information to provide care and support for him. You can give teachers insight into your child's health, learning style, successes and struggles. Report family incidents such as a new baby, or the death of a grandparent, as these events can affect your child at school.

Schools provide effective ways to communicate with parents. Attend Home and School or Parents' Association meetings. Meet with the Principal and ask for information about the school program, values and rules. Read school notices, newsletters and report cards. Attend parent-teacher interviews. Ask how your child's teacher evaluates students. Know what is expected of your child. Voice your opinions in a constructive way, so that you and the school can work together for your child's benefit.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

Language Arts at Home

And then what happened?

When you ask your child that question you are demonstrating an important part of language: active listening. You may be listening to a tall tale, a story from a talking circle or a description of a play on the football field. Your response will encourage your child to continue the conversation, and that is part of language arts.

Come snuggle up and read with me.

Reading is critical to learning. Read road signs and point out symbols to your child while driving the car or riding the bus. If your children see you enjoying books, magazines and newspapers, they will do the same. Teach them to use your local library. It's fun to cuddle up with a youngster for a treasured story, but read aloud to your older child too. Read an unusual newspaper article, or the words to a favourite rock song. Then discuss it.

That's a great story! Write it down on paper.

Language includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each part contributes to the growth of the others. Urge your child to write in a journal to develop clear thinking and expressive writing. Suggest sending his well-written poem to a grandparent. All the better, if Grandpa sends back a response.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

School without Walls

As parents, you are your children's first teachers. Your attitudes about school and learning are often passed on to your children. You can convey a positive message that education helps create our future. Children need to understand that life is school without walls.

Speak positively about your children's school, its staff and its rules. Encourage a cooperative attitude in class and on the school grounds. Respond with enthusiasm when your children talk about school projects and activities: *Sounds like that trip to Batoche was fun. Wish I'd been there, too!* Relate what they've learned to real life – math in the grocery store, reading street signs and maps. They'll realize that education is important.

Encourage them to join the track team, the school choir or the school newspaper group. In after-school activities, they'll find friends with common interests and develop natural talents to boost self-esteem.

Listen when your children express concerns and fears about school. Assure them that you are listening, but that you need all sides of a story. If you have respectful, two-way conversations, your children can learn to solve their own problems. They'll trust that school offers positive challenges worth facing.



***Get Involved. . .
in Learning with Your Child***

***Understanding Saskatchewan's
Core Curriculum***

If Lisa's science class goes to the Science Centre, don't think the class is goofing off! Observing a wriggling snake helps Lisa and her classmates understand more about snake life. And, who knows? Lisa may become a zookeeper – or a biologist.

Education has been renewed. What, where and how students learn are changing and alive. In Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum, seven required areas of study include:

- English language arts, to develop reading, writing and speaking skills.
- Health education, to understand and build healthy lifestyles.
- Mathematics, to learn to calculate and solve problems.
- Arts education, to explore dance, drama, music and visual art.
- Physical education, to understand and achieve physical fitness.
- Science, to explore nature and technology.
- Social Studies, to learn about and contribute to society.

As well, Lisa's teacher encourages her to think for herself. Lisa is learning to be creative, to develop personal values and to study on her own. She is learning computer, math and communication skills to use in her work. These skills and attitudes, called *Common Essential Learnings*, are part of the new Core Curriculum. Its goal is to prepare students to meet challenges and to continue learning throughout life.



***Get Involved . . .
in Learning with Your Child***

Striving for Quality

Did Crystal understand her math lesson? Did Ryan complete his essay on time? Today classrooms have changed. The focus is on Crystal and Ryan – on students themselves. They have more responsibility. They're learning to learn.

In Saskatchewan schools, teachers stress academic skills, critical thinking, values and healthy lifestyles. In class, students may work on their own projects or they may work in groups. With their teacher, students may draw up a contract to outline their studies. So how do we evaluate student progress?

We're all familiar with tests and quizzes. But teachers also observe students doing group projects and working hands-on with objects. Teachers change ways of teaching and evaluating to help each student. A student's mark reflects a variety of school experiences.

At parent-teacher-student interviews, ask your child's teacher about evaluation. And give the school marks too. Look for signs that the school is top notch. Does it respect, protect and encourage your child? Make sure you support that effort at home. Read to your child. Discuss school projects. Help with homework. You, your child, the teacher, the school and the community – all help students to learn. Top efforts will produce quality learning.

Letters to Parents and Students

A letter sent from the school by a teacher can greatly enhance home-school relations. The letter indicates to parents the genuine interest a teacher has in the lives of individual students and can provide additional information about expectations during the school year. The school logo can be included on the letterhead which helps parents to recognize school communications.

Letters sent before school formally begins can be mailed to students and are particularly effective with very young children. Kindergarten teachers, for example, can send a welcome card or letter to their students in the summer as a way of introducing them, ahead of time, to the school environment. This letter may be sent after a June visiting day when students have a chance to "try out Kindergarten".

Letters sent from the school can indicate the importance of parents as partners in the educational progress of students and set the stage for a parent's involvement throughout a child's school career. Parents work as a team with individual teachers to assist and support the school learning community. A letter might contain any of the following:

- introduction of the teacher and background skills and interests (e.g., First Aid, art, music, computers, etc.);
- an overview of course content for the year, field trips, etc;
- an appeal for parent participation and involvement during the year;
- a description of classroom routines and procedures; and,
- a list of required school supplies and school fees.

Parents who receive such a letter are given an introduction to their child's teacher and have a sense of the organization and planning for the year ahead.

End of Year Correspondence:

A letter sent at the end of the school year is another effective communication device. The letter might include suggestions for summer reading or activities, a school supply list for the coming year or a thank you to parents for supporting their children's learning throughout the school year. The letter can set the tone for continued communication and goodwill in the new school year and in the years to come.

50 Ways Parents Can Help Schools

B-6

Voluntary Roles

1. Share information with a student or class about a hobby.
2. Share information with a student or a class about a career.
3. Share information with students about a country you visited or lived in.
4. Tutor one or a small group of students in reading, math or other subject areas.
5. Help coach an athletic team.
6. Help check a student's written work.
7. Help put together a school or classroom newsletter (can also be done at home).
8. Help sew or paint a display.
9. Help build something (new playground equipment, storage shed).
10. Help students work on a final exhibition or project (can also be done at home or workplace).
11. Help answer the school's phone.
12. Help plan a new playground for the school.
13. Help plan a theme-based presentation for students.
14. Help present a theme-based program for students.
15. Demonstrate cooking from a particular country or culture to students.
16. Share a particular expertise with teachers (such as use of computers, dealing with disruptive students).
17. Help students plan and build an outdoor garden or other project to beautify the outside of the school.
18. Help coach students competing in an academic competition (Debating Competition, Math Contest, Oratory).
19. Help bring senior citizens to school to watch a student production.

Support Learning in the Community

20. Help set up an internship or apprenticeship for a student at your business, organization or agency.
21. Host a one-day "shadow study" for one or a small group of students about your career.
22. Go on a local field trip with a teacher and a group of students.
23. Go on an extended (3-5 day) cross-country field trip with a teacher and students.
24. Contact a particular local business or organization regarding possible cooperation or sponsorship.
25. Help to create a natural area outside the building where students can learn.

Participate in Advisory and Decision-Making Roles

26. Serve on a school level organization.
27. Serve on a committee that reports to a school level organization.
28. Serve on a school division committee representing the school.
29. Help organize a school level organization.
30. Help design a parent and/or student survey for the school.
31. Help conduct and/or tabulate results of a parent survey regarding the school.

Share Information or Advocate for the School

32. Serve as a member of a "telephone tree" to distribute information quickly.
33. Write a letter to legislators in support of the school.
34. Write a letter to school board members in support of the school.
35. Go to a school board meeting to advocate for the school.
36. Go to another school to provide information about your school.
37. Help design a brochure or booklet about the school.
38. Help translate information from the school into a language other than English.
39. Help translate at a parent-teacher-student conference for people who do not speak English.
40. Provide transportation to a parent-teacher-student conference for a parent who needs a ride.
41. Write an article for publication in a magazine about the school's activities.
42. Help arrange for a political leader (mayor, city council, provincial representative, Member of Parliament) to visit the school.

Increase Financial Resources Available to the School

43. Help write a proposal that would bring new resources to the school.
44. Donate materials to the school.
45. Arrange for a business or other organization to donate materials to the school.
46. Help with a fundraiser for the school.

Help Other Parents Develop their Parenting Skills

47. Organize a parenting class.
48. Organize a parenting video night.
49. Help write, publish and distribute a list of parenting tips.
50. Invite a community member to lead a workshop on children's literature, choosing educational toys, nutrition, etc.

Developing Outreach Strategies

B-7

Communities are comprised of a variety of groups of people who share common geographical, ethnocultural, historic, religious, linguistic, or other backgrounds or experiences, people who share a particular challenge or disability, and people who share business, organizational, or institutional experiences. All these people have something to contribute to your school or school level organization. To be successful, involve all of them, and take advantage of their experiences, knowledge and skills.

You can begin by finding out more about the members of your community. To find out who makes up your community, what information your community receives and needs, and how information is presently provided, your school level organization might consider questions such as the following:

- Who belongs to our community?
- What organizations and networks exist?
- Who are the community leaders?
- To whom does the school and parent group send information?
- What can our school do for the community?
(e.g., shovel walks of elderly residents in winter)
- What information does the school communicate to our community?
- Does the information satisfy all of the diverse needs of the community?
- What do the members of our community need to know?
- How does the school and the parent group currently exchange information within a diverse community?
- Does the school or the parent group have a contact person in each external organization or network?
- Is two-way communication promoted?

It is important to keep external organizations, including ethnocultural groups informed. You might consider some of the following ways of communicating with these diverse groups:

- Distributing newsletters and flyers.
- Inviting organizational/cultural representatives to visit the school.
- Consulting on community issues and needs.
- Holding meetings of the school council or school events in various recreation and cultural centres.
- Using local translators for meetings.
- Encouraging leaders of diverse ethnocultural groups to share information about school level organizations with members of their communities and promote the involvement of parents in the school.
- Using voice mail to record messages about school level organization activities in appropriate languages.
- Avoiding the scheduling of meetings on religious holidays.

- Designating council members to work with specific organizations or networks.

How to make your outreach successful:

- Create an outreach committee made up of representatives of the diverse groups within your community. Hold sessions with parents and other community members to brainstorm ideas for improving communications. Obtain specific information from everyone regarding outreach.
- Create and maintain a positive climate and attitude towards parent and community members among school staff, students, and your school level organizations.
- Treat every parent and community member with respect, trust and courtesy.
- Make sure that there is some mechanism in place that lets parents and community members communicate what they want, need, like, and dislike formally and regularly throughout the year. Be sure to follow up on any complaint.
- Offer information, workshops, and support for parents to help them learn more about what goes on in the school and how they can contribute to what their children are learning at school, both academically and socially. Include parents in pertinent planning sessions.
- Invite community leaders to school events.
- Arrange information meetings for parents and community members who do not attend meetings of the school level organization to let them know about your deliberations.
- Actively recruit parents to become involved in the school through teachers, other parents and council members.

The Aboriginal community is an example of one community group that should be part of your outreach. In this regard, it is important to reach out to parents and the community by working with the appropriate First Nations and Métis organizations and individuals:

- The local First Nations governance bodies;
- Chief and Council and/or Tribal Council;
- Elders;
- The First Nations trustee on the board of education;
- First Nations advisory committees;
- The First Nations Education Authority;
- Friendship Centre;
- Native Women's Association;
- Métis service organizations;
- Métis Nation of Saskatchewan;
- Aboriginal councils; and,
- Community agencies.

Parent Handouts

B-8

The following handouts can help to provide enhanced parent involvement in your school. Please feel free to duplicate and adapt these materials to make them useful to your community.



Supporting Learning in the Home

Like all parents, you want the best for your children and for them to succeed in school. There are a number of ways you can support your child's learning at home. You can:

- show your children that learning and school are important;
- read, read, read;
- listen to and talk with your child;
- play and create;
- make time for math; and,
- take an interest in work sent home from school.

Show Your Child that Learning and School are Important:

Children watch you and listen to what you say about school and learning. If you say good things about school and show your children that learning is fun and interesting, they will pick up on your enthusiasm. Here are some ways to show your child that you think learning is important and that you are proud of the work they do in school.

- Post artwork and school projects where everyone can see them (e.g., on the refrigerator).
- Ask about school work and encourage your child to complete it on time.
- Have some extra pencils, pens, pencil crayons, highlighter pens, paper clips, a pencil sharpener, paper and other school supplies at home (these are great ideas for treats on special days like Valentine's Day, etc.).
- Have a dictionary, atlas, magazines and other resources at home for your children's use or use the materials available at the public library.
- Help your child to find books, magazines or other resources for school projects.
- Speak well of teachers and school.
- Take the time to work out any problems that come up with the school or the teacher, making sure you understand all sides of the story.
- Attend school events or volunteer at school.
- Show that you are interested in learning by reading, taking a class or taking a family trip to the library.

Read, Read, Read:

Reading is an important skill. Reading helps children get the information they need and helps them in all subjects at school. Reading to children and having them read to you is fun and helps them develop into strong readers.

- Curl up with your infant, toddler or older child and read a story. Listen to older children read aloud.
- Talk about books and stories you read together or books that your older children are reading on their own. You could have your children describe what they imagined during the story, talk about a favourite part of the story or ask who their favourite characters were and why.
- Make up silly and serious stories together. You might start with a picture and have your child make up a story about it. Make up stories about favourite characters in books or on television.
- Sing with your children. Silly songs, raps, chants, lullabies and folk songs give children a chance to play with language and learn new words and sounds.
- Read books, magazines and newspapers. You can borrow these from the public library. A home full of interesting books and magazines inspires children to read.

Listen to and Talk with Your Child:

Parents are busy people. It is important, however, to make time to talk with each one of your children. Whether they show it or not, they want and need your attention.

- Listen to your child's jokes, songs or stories. Your hearty laughter will encourage her/him!
- Ask questions about their day. You might need to be specific because *How was school today?* will usually be answered in one word – *good* or *okay*. Try *Did you have gym today?* or *Who did you play with at recess?* or *What are you reading these days?* as conversation starters.
- Children ask a lot of questions. Take the time to listen and help your child find the answers.
- Talk about things that are happening in your community and the world. If you can, make opportunities for children to see the news firsthand – if a local grain elevator is being torn down, take your child to watch.
- Talk about how you want your child to treat others. Talk about bullies and how to handle them.
- Talk about drug and alcohol abuse with your children and how they can live a healthy lifestyle.

Play and Create:

Children need lots of opportunities to play and create things. Here are some ideas:

- Keep some egg cartons, cans, plastic containers, pinecones, jars, old greeting cards, catalogues and newspapers around the house that children can use for crafts and school projects.
- Ask your child to teach you something he or she is good at – like how to use a computer, roller blade or do a craft.
- Share your own hobbies and interests such as knitting, playing guitar or woodworking with your child.
- Ensure that young people have lots of opportunities to play outside, spend time with friends, play sports, read, daydream and rest. Try to strike a balance.
- Help children use television and computers wisely. Encourage them to limit the amount of time they spend in front of the screen. Watch some television shows with them so that you know what they are watching and can talk about it with them. Join them for a session at the computer so that you can talk about the games they play or what they might be seeing on the Internet.

Make Time for Math:

We use math skills every day. Here are some ways that children can learn about math while doing everyday activities:

- Help your children learn math through cooking. Have your child measure the litres of water into your biggest pot. Cut the carrots and celery into halves, quarters and other fractions. Estimate when the soup will be ready.
- Measure rainfall in containers or keep track of a baby brother's height and weight each month. Plant some beans in a cup and keep track of the plant's growth day by day.
- On a family holiday, have children calculate distances on a map and how long it will take to get from Yorkton to Fort Qu'Appelle or Edam to North Battleford. Watch signs that give altitudes and other information. *So that's what 21,987 feet above sea level looks like!*
- Have your children estimate what time you will arrive at Grandpa's birthday party in Watrous if you are leaving home at 2:00 p.m.

Take an Interest in Work Sent Home from School:

Homework is important. It gives students a chance to practise skills. It also gives you a chance to see what your children are learning and where they may need extra help:

- Ask your children about the work they need to do and when it must be handed in. Have them mark the date on a calendar.

- Set aside a regular time for homework every day. The time needs to work for your child and fit into the family schedule. On days when there is no homework sent from school, use the time to read together, practise math skills or play a board game.
- Provide a quiet, well-lit work space. You don't need to buy a desk or fancy chair. The kitchen table can work just fine.
- Make yourself available to help when your children are doing homework but don't take over. Help your children by asking questions, providing explanations or helping them find the information they need.
- Have your children explain the lessons they are working on. When they explain it to you in their own language, it will help them understand the lesson better. If they seem confused about an assignment or project, encourage them to talk to their teacher. You might help them come up with some questions to ask.
- If your children have big projects, help them break the task into smaller parts and make a list of "to dos". Each day they can tick off what they've done and plan for the next day. This might help avoid those last minute trips to the library.
- Let your child know that you care about their work and want them to complete it on time. Ask questions about the work they are doing. *How is the research for your Batoche project going? What have you learned that's interesting?*
- Help your children find the answers they need. Direct them to a teacher or someone you know that might have the information. If they need information about farming, let them call an aunt or uncle who has a farm. Visit the library or a local museum. Help them use dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, phone books, the Internet and other information sources.
- Help your children proof read their work by having them read it out loud with you. Usually mistakes are more obvious when read out loud.
- Sometimes rewards help children to complete tasks. *Let's go on a bike ride as soon as you finish your spelling practice!*
- Encourage your children when they feel discouraged with homework. *I know you can do it and I'll help you get started.*

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Your help and support is appreciated!



Parents at School

When you get involved at the school, you show your child that learning is important. There are benefits for you, your child and the school as a whole.

Some Ways to Get Involved at School:

- Encourage your child to go to school every day and be on time.
- Attend school events, concerts and performances.
- Offer your help in the classroom. Let your child's teacher know that you would like to help out and what kinds of things you would like to do. There are many ways that parents can help out – listening to children read, helping with art projects, playing learning games or sharing a hobby or interest. Sometimes teachers may want to plan a project that needs an extra pair of hands for days when parent volunteers are able to attend.
- Help with school clubs like a pottery club, gardening club, photography club or chess club.
- Attend meetings of the parent association or other school level organization. (Often child-care is available free of charge during meetings).
- Help with fundraising – this doesn't just mean selling and baking. You might be able to ask a local business to sponsor prizes, equipment or events.
- Join the planning team for an upcoming school barbecue, family dance or carnival.
- Offer to help with field trips – they can be fun and give you a chance to get to know the students, the teacher and other parents.
- Attend sports activities or offer to coach a team.
- Make a point of attending parent-teacher-student conferences or interviews. They provide a good opportunity to talk to the teacher and to share information about your child.
- Participate in or organize parent workshops. Topics might include parenting, talking with your children or the school learning program.
- Offer to be the class representative or to phone other parents about school activities.
- Invite the class to tour your place of work.
- Help build or repair playground equipment.
- Attend or organize a spring work bee to clean up the school grounds, plant trees and flowers, and paint playground equipment.
- Offer to help with the school newsletter or yearbook.

- Collect craft items like paper rolls, egg cartons, buttons, yarn or scraps of fabric for school art projects.
- Offer to help with photocopying or making learning materials for the classroom.
- Help out in the library with shelving books, cataloguing materials, repairing books, etc.
- Organize a classroom potluck.

But I Don't Have Time to be Involved!

Parents/guardians are busy people. Work and family responsibilities take up much of your time. Getting involved at the school tells your child that school is important and that you want to be involved. Here are a few tips to help you get involved.

- If you need time away from work to attend parent-teacher-student conferences, help out at school or attend school events, try asking your employer if you can work extra hours or take shorter lunch breaks to make up the time.
- Set a goal: commit two half-days each year to help out in your child's classroom, on a field trip or in the school.
- Ask the school to plan events at different times so that all parents/guardians have a chance to participate at least some of the time.
- Find ways to help outside school hours, such as telephoning other parents, preparing learning materials or typing articles for the school newsletter at home.
- Help to organize babysitting by older students in the school so that you can attend meetings and events while your child is cared for.
- Let your school know that you're ready to help and that you have particular skills. Your involvement will have a positive impact on your child's school attitude towards school, attendance and academic achievement.



Parent and School Communications

Communication between the home and the school needs to be two-way. Whether it is the school or the parent who begins the communication, it's up to both sides to keep the dialogue flowing. Schools may send notes, plan parent-teacher-student interviews, hold open houses, use school agendas or use voice mail in an effort to communicate with parents. Parents can send notes, telephone the school, attend parent-teacher-student interviews and school events, and keep track of messages they receive.

By communicating with the school, you can help your child succeed. Talk with teachers about the good things that happen as well as problems. You can also talk with the teacher about happenings at home that might affect your child at school. Teachers need to know about your child's joys and sadness or other things that might change the way he or she behaves at school. The more a teacher knows about your child, the better he or she can help your child to learn.

Inform the teacher of :

- medical problems such as allergies, diabetes, asthma or chronic illness that may require special consideration in class or on the playground;
- family changes such as a new baby, a grandmother moving in, separation and divorce, a second marriage, moving, family illness or death, the death of a family pet, a new job or loss of a job or new routines;
- changes to child care arrangements or caregivers;
- fears or phobias;
- physical changes (e.g., new braces, glasses, etc.);
- concerns you have about how your child is getting along with others;
- special interests such as art, insects, knights and castles, collecting model tractors or Ukrainian dance; and,
- changes you have noticed in your child's behaviour.

There are a variety of ways you can communicate with your child's teacher and keep up-to-date on what is happening at school. Here are some ideas:

- Talk to the teacher about school work and your child's progress, you can thank the teacher for helping your child learn something new, talk about a subject or assignment that is giving your child trouble and ask for ideas to try at home. Sometimes it's also helpful to talk to the teacher about how your child is getting along with other students.

- Attend parent-teacher-student interviews or conferences. You might want to go with a few questions written down so that you can make good use of the time with the teacher.
- Look at the work your child brings home so that you can talk with the teacher about it when you have an opportunity.
- Read school newsletters, memos and notices that come home with your child. Note important information on the calendar.
- Give your child the responsibility of emptying his/her backpack each day so that you get the notes and other information that comes home from school.
- Write notes to your child's teacher or telephone the school to ask questions, discuss successes and deal with concerns.

When you communicate well with the school you support your child and the school. In return, your school will be able to support your child and you.



Evaluating Jesse's Progress

School's fun. I get to play with Brad and Chris at recess. Mrs. Jacobs makes us laugh. I like finding books in the library. I like the science experiments with worms. I'm learning to make pizza. But tests - Yuk!

Jesse

There's no way around it! Even good students get butterflies when they think of tests and report cards. So why do we spoil Jesse's school day with tests?

Teachers use tests and other tools to find out what and how children are learning. This helps the student, the teacher and parents. Students need feedback from teachers to find out what they do well and where they must work harder. The teacher needs information to find out the best ways to teach each child. Finally, parents need information to understand their child's learning and to give help and encouragement at home.

Classrooms have changed. Students today have more responsibility for their own learning than in the past. They are encouraged to share what they know with others. They learn where to find information and work on their own and in groups. They learn through reading, writing, watching, listening and doing. As a result, assessment (or how teachers measure what students are learning) must be more diverse. Teachers continuously assess and evaluate students' work, skills and attitudes.

Teachers assess (measure) learning in a variety of ways to find out how students are progressing. Jesse's teacher may use some or all of the following approaches:

- **Informal observations:**

Does Jesse participate often by raising his hand?

How often does Jesse have something insightful to say?

Does Jesse need more encouragement?

Is Jesse productive in group work?

Does Jesse need help in organizing his work?

- **Tests and informal quizzes:**

What can Jesse tell us about what we have been studying without help from others?

What parts has Jesse learned?

What parts need additional teaching?

- **Student self-evaluation:**

What can Jesse tell us about the areas of his own work that are well done and the areas where improvement is needed?

What can Jesse learn from making changes to his own work with the guidance of the teacher?

How does immediate feedback help Jesse improve?

When Jesse's teacher has gathered enough information, she can report progress to both Jesse and Jesse's parents. Report cards are one way that progress is communicated. Other communication is less formal. A teacher might call parents to let them know about a particular learning – *Jesse can read!*

Parents also have a role in reporting progress. They might call or write a note to let the teacher know about something their child has done – *Jesse tied his shoes today!* Reporting progress is a team effort, the teacher, parent and student, have the shared goal of Jesse reaching his full potential.

Report cards are a snapshot of Jesse at one particular point in time. The report is based on Jesse's performance and what is expected for the particular time of the year. It will likely change in six months as Jesse grows, matures and develops new skills.

Two or three times a year, parent-teacher-student interviews provide a more formal occasion to share information about Jesse. This is an opportunity for praise – *I like the way you act out Harry Potter with so much expression in your voice!* It can also be an opportunity to think about and set personal learning goals – *I'd like to learn my nine times table because that one gives me trouble.* The teacher works with parents and students to determine reasonable learning goals for the future.

With the information gained from tests and other ways of determining student progress, teachers can determine what needs to be learned and how best to teach it. This helps them plan the best possible learning opportunities for all students in the classroom.



Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum – What Did You Do At School Today?

Teachers throughout Saskatchewan care about what, how and where students learn. Since the 1980s, Saskatchewan's curriculum has undergone a good deal of change. Today the *Core Curriculum* is used in Saskatchewan Schools. *Core Curriculum* is not just about what is taught in schools. It has a number of different parts, including:

- Required Areas of Study;
- Common Essential Learnings;
- Adaptive Dimension;
- Locally-Determined Options;
- Resource-Based Learning;
- Aboriginal Content and Perspectives;
- Multicultural Education;
- Gender Equity; and,
- Special Education.

Some of these terms are self-explanatory, others are education jargon that need some explaining. The following information is intended to provide further information about each of these parts of the *Core Curriculum*.

Required Areas of Study

There are seven required areas of study:

- **language arts**, to learn listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing skills;
- **mathematics**, to learn to compute and solve problems;
- **science**, to explore nature and technology;
- **social studies**, to understand and work in communities;
- **health education**, to learn about and protect good health;
- **arts education**, to enjoy and create music, dance, drama and visual art; and,
- **physical education**, to achieve personal fitness through physical activity.

Common Essential Learnings

The *Common Essential Learnings* (CELs) are six areas containing knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that are integrated within the seven *Required Areas of Study*. The CELs are not additional subjects,

rather, these learning areas are developed while students are engaged in learning subjects such as math, science, social studies or physical education. The CELs include:

- **communication** – improving language abilities;
- **numeracy** – using mathematical concepts in everyday life;
- **critical and creative thinking** – learning to value knowledge, learning and creativity;
- **technological literacy** – understanding how technology is integral to society;
- **personal and social values** – looking at personal, moral and social aspects of school subjects; and,
- **independent learning** – encouraging students to be capable, self-reliant, life-long learners.

Adaptive Dimension

We know that not all children learn in the same way. Some learn best by seeing or reading, some need to touch and manipulate objects to understand concepts, while others learn best by hearing. Many children use a combination of these learning styles when introduced to new information.

Teachers adjust their methods to help each student learn to the best of his or her ability. In Saskatchewan's curriculum, this is called the *Adaptive Dimension*. Teachers adapt materials, methods and the environment to provide the best learning opportunities for all students.

Learning adaptations are as unique as the classrooms and individual students they support. For example, Hannah learns best by observation, she will often watch during gym class and will only participate when she feels safe and ready. Adam understands math concepts best when making models before exploring the concepts with paper and pencil. You may have noticed such differences in the way your own children learn.

Teachers, working with parents, get to know the learning needs of their students. Teachers use a number of ways to help students learn such as going on a field trip, watching a video, reading, discussing and writing.

Locally-Determined Options

Your community and the board of education can decide to provide courses or parts of courses that are related to the community's cultural, religious or academic interests. For example, schools in some communities offer Ukrainian while in other communities, Aboriginal languages are available.

Resource-Based Learning

In the past, schools relied on books and other print materials as their primary learning resource. You may have had one or two text books for each course. Today, teachers are encouraged to practise *Resource-Based Learning*, which involves the use of a wide array of print, electronic and human resources to assist students in learning. This can include the use of video, computer/internet, books, resource people, and a number of other resources both within and outside of the community. Using resources in this way helps young people learn where to look for information and how to determine whether a source of information is reliable or not. It also ensures that up-to-date materials are used in the classroom.

Aboriginal Content and Perspectives

School curriculum is designed to include awareness of a student's own culture, as well as the cultures of others. Aboriginal content is included in the curriculum and helps to develop positive attitudes in all students toward First Nations and Métis peoples.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is promoted and encourages learners to view different cultures as a source of learning and enrichment. Diversity is celebrated as students learn about their own and others' ethnocultural heritage.

Gender Equity

Your child's education program is committed to gender equity so that both boys and girls can participate actively and have equal opportunities. All students need encouragement to explore a wide variety of options based on aptitudes, abilities and interests, rather than gender.

Special Education

Children's learning needs are diverse and wide-ranging. The *Education Act, 1995* recognizes that due to physical, intellectual, social, cultural and environmental factors, some students may require additional supports in order to learn. Students have the right to receive instruction that is academically and developmentally appropriate for them.

Saskatchewan's *Core Curriculum* helps to ensure that your children and others in their school can reach their full potential and succeed in school and in life.

Codes of Ethics

B-9

It is helpful to establish a code of ethics for volunteers involved in the school. A sample code of ethics appears below.

School Volunteers' Code of Ethics

I will:

- Come when expected, on time, or arrange for a substitute;
- Explore with the principal and/or teacher the role expectations before beginning;
- Work as part of the school team;
- Accept constructive feedback from school staff and students regarding work performance and adjust behaviour appropriately;
- Treat all students with respect and consideration and use a positive approach in all interactions with students; and,
- Hold confidential all privileged information regarding students, school staff or school activities.

Parents' Code of Ethics

- I will establish a direct and personal contact with my child's school by visiting it and getting first-hand knowledge of teaching activities and facilities.
- I will demonstrate constructive attitudes toward the school and its programs by supporting and co-operating with the teaching staff and the school board to the fullest possible extent.
- I will make no criticism of the school without ensuring that I have accurate and first-hand information.
- I will encourage a positive attitude on the part of my child and will refrain from criticism of the teachers or the school in my child's presence.
- I will expect nothing for myself or for my child which is contrary to the interests of the entire school.
- I will accept my share of responsibility for the partnership of home and school in the education of children.
- I will provide conditions favourable to study at home.
- I will co-operate with the school in developing and protecting the health and character of children.
- I will seek to learn about educational aims and methods so that I may better understand my child's school.

(Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1995)

To complement and support the *School Volunteers' Code of Ethics* and the *Parents' Code of Ethics* the following statement of commitment is suggested for school staff.

Staff Members' Code of Ethics

I will:

- Recognize volunteers' abilities and suggest areas in which volunteers can contribute;
- Provide volunteers with appropriate training;
- Help volunteers perform tasks in an educationally-sound manner and provide feedback as needed;
- Accept volunteers in a warm and positive manner as part of the team;
- Include volunteers in a variety of staff activities;
- Discuss the volunteer and his or her work only with the school principal, or other appropriate school staff; and,
- Respect the knowledge and contribution of all volunteers.

The following Parent Interest Survey can be duplicated/adapted and distributed to parents, perhaps at the beginning of the school year.

B-10

Sample Parent Interest Survey

Date: _____

Dear: _____

I am asking for your volunteer help in order to enrich your child's program at school.

Do you have a hobby/ies you are willing to share? _____

If yes, please specify. _____

Do you have a talent you are willing to share (computer skills, storytelling, writing, cooking, sewing, woodworking, music, art, dramatics, other)? _____

If yes, please specify. _____

Have you had experiences you are willing to share (travel, etc.)? _____

If yes, please describe. _____

Do you have an occupation or an association with a local business or industry of interest to children? _____

If yes, please specify. _____

Would you be interested in helping with any of the following?

If yes, please check those that apply:

Tutoring	_____	Telephone	_____
Bulletin boards	_____	Assembling display/	_____
Typing	_____	Resource materials	_____
Filing	_____	Library research	_____
Classroom activities	_____	Driving/Chaperoning	_____
Other (please specify)	_____	field trips	_____

Do you have some ideas of ways that you would like to become more involved in school programs? _____ If yes, please describe.

What time would you be able to be with us? Please check those that apply:

Before school	_____	Afternoon	_____
Morning	_____	After school	_____
Noon	_____	Other (please specify)	_____

Are there others in your family or neighbourhood who would like to volunteer at the school? _____

If yes, please provide names and phone numbers if known.

Thank you for filling out this form. We look forward to working with you in our school.

Signature

School Volunteer Application

B-11

Date: _____

Basic Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Do you have children enrolled in school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Names: _____ Grade _____ School _____

_____ Grade _____ School _____

_____ Grade _____ School _____

_____ Grade _____ School _____

Do you live within the school community?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please indicate any past experiences you have had as a volunteer in schools or any other community involvement. Note such things as activities, time spent, whether you worked alone or in a team situation:

Volunteer Commitment

Do you have any preference as to what you would like to do (e.g., classroom work, typing, photocopying, library, etc.)?

Would you be interested in volunteering?

- _____ once a week
- _____ once every two weeks
- _____ once a month
- _____ a couple of times/year
- _____ other (specify)

Would you be willing to undergo free training for volunteer work?
(e.g., attend workshops, training meetings, etc.) _____

Areas of Expertise

Please note any areas of expertise you may have. These may include work-related skills, such as computer work, typing, clerical work, library work, healthcare worker, mechanic, carpenter, etc.

Other areas of experience may be related to hobbies or pastime activities, such as weaving, pottery, reading, macramé, woodworking, needlepoint, painting, mechanics, electronics, etc. Please note these here if you would be willing to share them with students.

You may also have experience in some areas of enrichment such as playing a musical instrument, drama work, poetry appreciation, creative writing, etc. Please note these here if you would be willing to share them with students.

Please return this form to the Parent Coordinator when completed. Thank you for your interest in our Volunteer Program.

List Of Ways To Show Appreciation To School Volunteers

B-12

- Greet the volunteer by name and encourage students to use the volunteer's name.
- Thank the volunteer personally each day, noting special contributions.
- Set time to talk with the volunteer when children are not present and speak briefly with the volunteer each day before departure.
- Celebrate the volunteer's birthday and encourage students to write occasional thank-you notes.
- Use the volunteer's special talents, knowledge and interests in assigning tasks.
- Give the volunteer increasing responsibilities and more challenging tasks.
- Share articles and books of mutual interest – on child development, learning styles or content areas in which the volunteer works.
- Include the volunteer when planning class activities.
- Include the volunteer in staff meetings and in-service training when appropriate.
- Send a letter of appreciation from the school level organization.
- Arrange to have a thank you note sent from the board of education.
- Take the volunteer to lunch.
- Call or write when the volunteer is absent or ill.
- Invite experienced volunteers to help train new volunteers.
- Seek training opportunities for the volunteer, perhaps by providing a scholarship to a volunteer conference or workshop.
- Write an article on the volunteer's contributions for your school or community newsletter.

- Ask the volunteer coordinator or school-community relations staff person about a feature story on volunteers for the newspaper, radio or TV station.
- Nominate your volunteer for a volunteer award.
- Celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.
- Commend the volunteer to supervisory staff.
- Ask volunteers to help evaluate programs and suggest improvements.
- Ask the children to write a letter of thanks to the volunteer.
- Help plan a recognition event – an assembly, reception, breakfast, tea or luncheon, invite the director of education, trustees, administrators, parents and community leaders.
- Accommodate the volunteer's personal needs.
- Write a letter of recommendation when the volunteer requests it.
- Write a letter to the workplace of a school volunteer commending the volunteer's contribution to education.

(Adapted from the National Association of Partners in Education, 1989)

Parent Advisory Committees

B-13

The Saskatchewan Rivers School Division #119 Board has established a number of committees to provide advice and assistance on issues, programs and services. These include the:

Parents' Advisory Committee (P.A.C.): This is made up of parent representatives from each of the schools in the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. The P.A.C. meets monthly from September to June and reports to the Board.

Aboriginal Advisory Committee: This committee is comprised of parents of Aboriginal ancestry representing individual schools. The committee meets monthly from September to June and reports to the Board. The members of the committee are also available to act in a support role providing liaison between the school and parents/guardians of Aboriginal students.

French Immersion Parent Advisory Committee: The purpose of this committee is to be an advocate for French Immersion children by providing recommendations and advice within the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. The committee's mandate and its activities are currently being revised, and will soon be available in an expanded form.

Communications Committee: This is made up of representatives from all schools in the division and the Education Centre. Its function is to facilitate communication and to foster good public relations between the school division and the various publics served by it.

Strategic Planning Team: This is made up of representatives from various personnel categories within the school division. Its function is to make recommendations to the board of education on current issues of concern and future trends.

Examples of Commitments that all Members of a School Community can Make

- Share responsibility for learning.
- Set high standards and high expectations.
- Keep informed about the academic standards and performance of your local schools.
- Provide and support sound instruction.
- Organize and participate in tutoring and mentoring programs to provide reading partners with whom children can read for thirty minutes a day.
- Make schools safe and drug-free.
- Open other community facilities and churches as neighborhood-based safe havens, and meeting sites for parent-teacher conferences and other school-related gatherings.
- Sponsor, plan and participate in alcohol- and drug-free activities (e.g., dances, proms, graduation parties).
- Sponsor bands, athletics, arts programs, clubs and other activities for students.
- Help teachers, students and their families learn to use computers and the Internet.
- Support, organize, and participate in "Net Day" and other activities to connect schools to the Internet.
- Donate the technology and support necessary for school projects, whether it be computers, computer training, or telephones for teachers or for a homework hotline.
- Share responsibility for communication.
- Share expertise to help prepare students for post-secondary education and to find employment.

- Build a community network of concerned adults, including community leaders, law enforcement officers, journalists and others, to talk about, and publicize issues of concern to the schools and to the community (e.g., school safety, vandalism).
- Share responsibility for building capacity through training and volunteering.
- Encourage employers to adopt flexible employee leave policies that accommodate parent-teacher conferences and volunteering opportunities in schools.

Effective Communication for Conflict Resolution

Resolving Conflict

1. Identify the source of the conflict.

Seek to understand the conflict and discover its source. Conflict usually occurs because of disagreement on:

- facts;
- goals; or,
- methods, values, beliefs and ethics.

2. Identify contributing problems.

In seeking solutions to conflict in any of these areas, it is important to be aware of the common stumbling blocks:

- Communication
 - Does the discussion involve:
 - misinformation or lack of information?
 - ill-defined expectations?
 - hidden agendas?; or,
 - a lack of candour and an absence of trust?
- Organizational Structure
 - Can the defined decision-making process be more effective?
- Resources
 - Do limited resources, such as time, prevent seeking a solution to this conflict?
- Human Factors
 - Human personality traits such as authoritarianism, rigid viewpoints and low self-esteem can be difficult sources of conflict. They are often impossible to change and can be managed only with diplomacy and tact.

3. Resolve the Conflict

Clear, effective decision-making guidelines are important tools in resolving conflicts. Groups should establish an appeal process and conflict resolution procedures.

Interpersonal Teaming Skills

Members should:

- create a comfortable and open atmosphere for communicating;
- allow open discussion;
- treat one another with respect;
- encourage decision making through cooperation and consensus;
- not make assumptions, especially about cultural differences;
- show empathy, warmth, patience and understanding;
- support and consider diverse ideas;
- deal with disagreement and conflict openly and positively;
- ask questions and clarify understanding by rephrasing / paraphrasing; and,
- use pauses and appreciate silence.

(New Brunswick Education, 1997)

Individual Communication Strategies

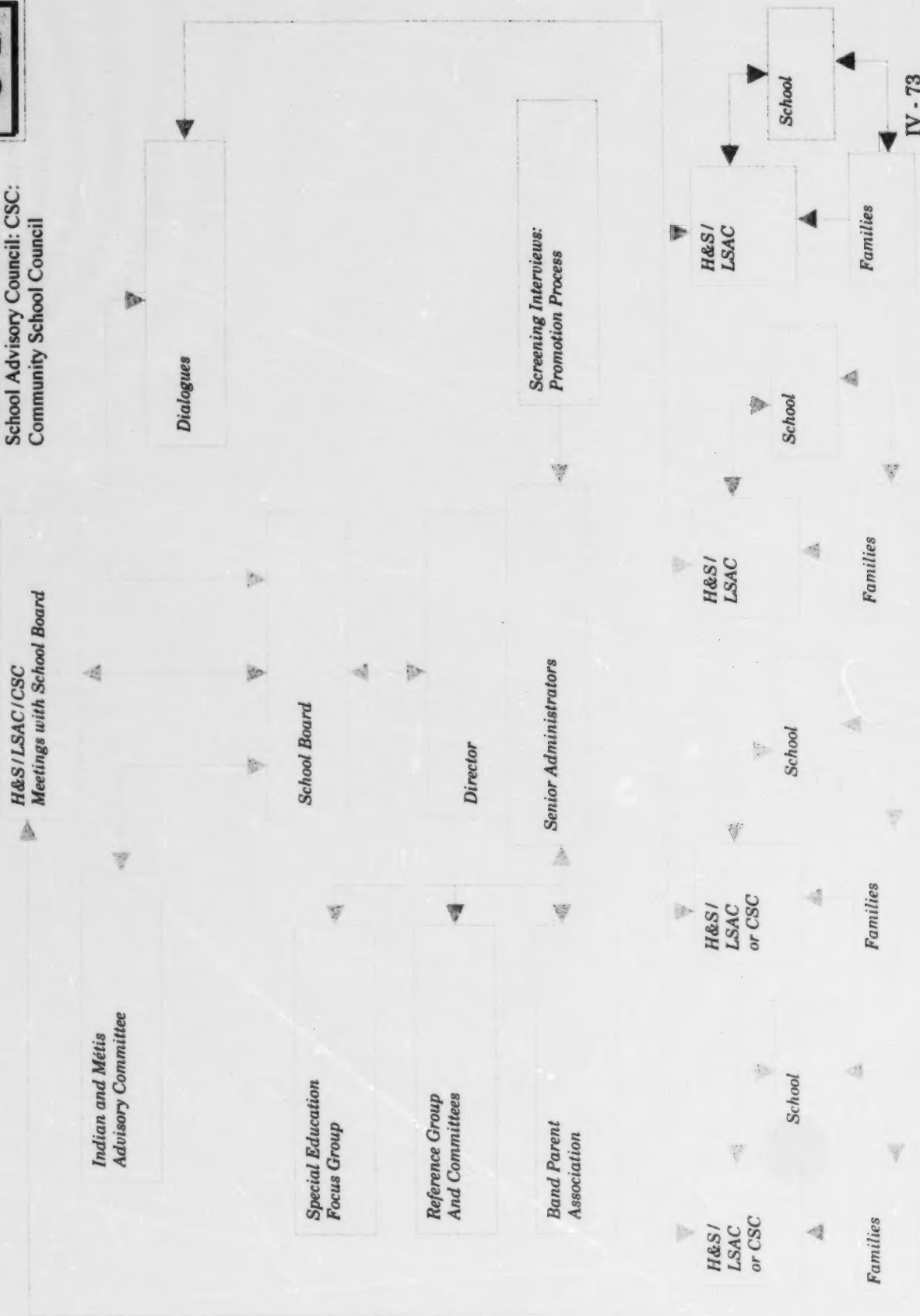
- Stop talking and learn to still the voice within. Listening is an important part of communication, but it cannot be done while you are talking.
- Carefully examine the other person's viewpoint. See if you can effectively summarize the points. You may find more to agree with than you imagine.
- Do not interrupt. Sit still past your tolerance level. Listen between the lines for implicit meanings, as well as for explicit ones.
- If you must interrupt, speak only affirmatively. Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical or disparaging comment while someone is expressing his or her view.
- When you speak, speak clearly and only to the issue being discussed. If you have several points to make, jot them down ahead of time to help keep focused.

Sample School Board Policies

Section C

C-1

Key: H&S: Home & School
Association: LSAC: Local
School Advisory Council: CSC:
Community School Council



Community Use of School Facilities

A. Buffalo Plains School Division

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

POLICY

Every school in the community represents a large expenditure of public funds. The School Board favors making maximum use of the school plant in serving the needs of school pupils and other members of the community. In order to achieve this, general regulations shall govern the use of school buildings for purposes other than offering of the approved school curriculum.

NOTE

The renting of buildings to approved groups is a community service. Rental charges are intended only to cover operational expenses and additional maintenance costs associated with the rentals. The Board does not rent space in school buildings to any individual or firm for commercial or monetary gain. For the most part, rentals are limited to service clubs, religious organizations, or other groups seeking to promote the educational, cultural, and recreational aspect of community life. Normally, groups from outside the community may not use school facilities.

The lessee is advised to purchase its own liability insurance for any event it sponsors and for which school division property is utilized. In the event that the school division incurs any loss or damage for which the lessee is responsible, the school division's liability insurance does not extend to cover the negligence of non-school users of the property. Therefore, it is advised that the lessee arrange liability insurance to cover such negligence.

REGULATIONS

1. Type of Activity
 - 1.1 Classroom or Gymnasium - No Charge
 - 1.1.1 School sponsored students' activities.
 - 1.1.2 District Board of Education meetings.
 - 1.1.3 School Board Employees' meetings and functions.
 - 1.1.4 Home and School Association meetings and functions.
 - 1.1.5 Cubs, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Scouts Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, 4-H Club, Music Festivals, and Junior Red Cross. Activities are limited to

children of school age and for the most part residing in the area surrounding the community.

- 1.2 Classroom or Gymnasium - Caretaking Fee Charged
 - 1.2.1 Approved groups sponsored by local community and recreation organizations. Attached to the youth groups may be some adult physical fitness classes or athletic activities which would necessitate caretaking services.
 - 1.2.2 Church using facilities for religious services.
 - 1.2.3 Benevolent organizations.
 - 1.2.4 Service clubs, church groups, and other community groups sponsoring events at which no charge is made. A silver collection is allowed.
 - 1.2.5 Other meetings authorized by the principal and the Board of Trustees.
- 1.3 Classroom and Gymnasium - Rental and Caretaking Fee
 - 1.3.1 Refers to organizations, groups, and clubs who are service oriented in nature but whose function is to raise funds for the respective non-profit organization.

2. Schedule of Rental Rates

- 2.1 Classroom
 - \$10.00 for up to 4 hours to a maximum of \$15.00 per day.
- 2.2 Gymnasium
 - \$15.00 per hour up to a maximum \$75.00 per day.

3. Caretaking Charges

- 3.1 Notwithstanding the preceding regulations, when in the opinion of the principal, it is not necessary to have unscheduled caretaking staff on duty then the caretaking fee is to be nil. When, in the opinion of the principal, unscheduled caretaking staff is required, there will be a minimum charge of \$8.00 per caretaking hour. Organizations utilizing caretaking services shall remunerate the caretaker directly.

4. General

- 4.1 The Buffalo Plains School Division Board of Education reserves the right to review any application for use of school facilities. The Board thereby also reserves the right to cancel or ratify an application to utilize school facilities.
- 4.2 The Board of Education reserves the right to change the rental fees without notice.
- 4.3 Application for rental or use of school space shall be made to the principal of the school who may in conjunction with the respective Board of Trustees allocate school space for the various activities.

- 4.4 The principal in conjunction with Board of Trustees shall have the authority to make decisions within the general framework of the Policy Regulations and intent of these regulations, but he shall submit applications to the Board of Education for any major departures from approved policy.
- 4.5 Any use not covered by these policies or regulations must come to the Board of Education for approval.
- 4.6 Payment of fees according to the schedule shall be made to the school office in advance of the function. The principal shall then submit fees and a brief report to the Secretary-Treasurer monthly. This excludes the Community College Agreement.

5. Restrictions and Care of School Property

- 5.1 School premises must be left in a tidy condition by the party renting the school.
- 5.2 Groups renting or using school facilities are held responsible for any damage or breakage beyond normal wear and tear. If any damage should occur, the group is asked to report it to the principal and to bring the matter to the attention of the Secretary-Treasurer so that a suitable settlement may be made.
- 5.3 Adequate supervision by competent adults must be provided in all cases where school buildings are being used outside regular school hours by school children, high school students, and other young people under eighteen years of age. Failure of any group to provide this supervision will be sufficient cause for cancelling the permit authorizing the rental.
- 5.4 Smoking in division facilities is not permitted except where permitted by a Joint Use Agreement.
- 5.5 The drinking of alcoholic beverages on school premises is forbidden except where permitted by a Joint Use Agreement.
- 5.6 No structures, ramps, or stage properties shall be erected in school buildings and no electrical circuits shall be changed without the approval of the principal.
- 5.7 Rentals are not made if they conflict with the school program.
- 5.8 Parties using the school must not touch the heating and ventilation controls. These are the responsibility of the caretaker.
- 5.9 Motorized traffic is prohibited on school grounds except in authorized parking areas.
- 5.10 Where hardwood gymnasium floors exist, those in charge of functions involving banquets must cover the floor with suitable material.

- 5.11 It is not the policy of the Board to rent schools indefinitely to church groups. However, the Board does make its schools available to congregations pending the building of a church. Applications must be renewed annually.
- 5.12 Public address systems are not ordinarily available for the use of the renting parties. If such equipment is used by special arrangement with the principal, an additional charge of \$5.00 will be made. Use of other equipment must be cleared with the principal. See Regulation #6.
- 5.13 Public dances are not permitted.
- 5.14 Running shoes must be worn by all persons participating in athletic events in the gymnasium. Footwear that may damage the gymnasium floor shall be prohibited.
- 5.15 All school keys used in the daily operation of the school shall be the responsibility of the principal. Any groups within the community requiring keys shall obtain them from the principal, who shall be entirely satisfied that buildings, equipment, and supplies are respected. All keys shall be returned to the principal immediately after the agreed-upon arrangement expires for the use of the building, or any part thereof, and the equipment. Long-term arrangements (more than one day) for keys may be made with the principal.

All keys shall be obtained by signature and the principal shall keep an exact record of the keys distributed. The person receiving a key shall be responsible for security including locking and unlocking the school facility.

- 6. School Equipment
Normally, school equipment may not be lent for use outside the school.
- 7. Community Regional College
The Board's policy for the Community Regional College is such that the school may be used day or night as long as it does not interfere with any school activities.
- 8. The Christmas break, Easter break, and summer vacation period are times in the school year when school caretakers and division maintenance personnel conduct thorough cleaning and maintenance functions. In light of these considerations, individuals who are involved in school sponsored activities, staff who may be working at the school, or community groups who may be utilizing school facilities are requested in consultation with the principal or his designate to organize their activities in such a manner as to not impede or negate caretaking and maintenance operations.

B. Coronach School

Community Use Policy

To arrange the use of the Coronach School which is mutually acceptable to the school and the community.

Who can Use the School:

(In order of priority)

1. School-sponsored functions and extra-curricular activities under teacher or adult supervision
2. Non-profit organized youth groups under teacher or adult supervision
3. Non-profit adult groups
4. Other groups on the approval of the principal and District Board designate

General

1. The existing rules of the school are to be recognized and adhered to, as well as the following:
 - a) any damage or loss of school property is the responsibility of the user group
 - b) smoking is not allowed in the school or on school property
 - c) alcohol or drugs are not allowed in the school or on school property
 - d) activities must **be supervised** by an adult at all times
2. Gym equipment may be used by outside groups after discussion and approval from the Principal or his designate.
3. A minimum \$50.00 deposit must be paid in advance. *Cheque is payable to Coronach School.* This deposit **will** be refunded if the key is returned and the school and its contents, after inspection, are found to be in satisfactory condition. Any damage to the school or equipment which is borrowed by the user group may result in the loss of part or all of this deposit.
4. There must be a time set for beginning and ending all activities. School use will not be allowed after 10:00 p.m.
5. A responsible adult shall be in charge of each activity. This person must be in the designated area constantly during the activity. He/She shall see that the doors are supervised and only entrance to members of that organization is allowed.

6. School doors are not to be blocked in the open position.
7. Arrange for your group to clean up after the activity is over:
 - a) lights out
 - b) floors cleaned (scrap paper, etc.)
 - c) equipment put away (if necessary)
 - d) desks put back in order
8. When making arrangements, a specific part of the school will be stated for use. That - and only that part - will be used. People will not be allowed to use just any part of the school unless so designated on the contract. It is the responsibility of the person in charge to see that only the approved part of the school is used.
9. If you wish to use the school for an evening event, arrangements must be made **TWO DAYS PRIOR** to the event taking place. If the event is to take place all day or more than one day, the activity must be approved by the District Board of Trustees.
10. The group wishing to use the school is responsible for opening and closing the school and making arrangements with the principal to pick up and return school keys.
11. The school shall not be available for use during holiday sessions unless special permission from the principal is obtained.
12. Classrooms shall be used for instructional use only.

The above regulations and fees may be changed at any time by the agreement of the Principal of Coronach School and the Local Board of Trustees.

Approved by the Principal and Coronach & District Board of Trustees
this 31st day of August, 1998.

Chairperson of the Board

1. Name of Activity
2. Name of Organization
3. Persons in charge of supervision
Telephone: Res:
4. Dates of Activity
5. Time of Activity
6. Date Deposit Paid (Must be paid in advance)
Receipt No.

The user group is advised to purchase its own liability insurance for any event it sponsors and for which school division property is utilized. In the event that the school division incurs any loss or damage for which the lessee is responsible, the school division's insurers may claim

reimbursement from the lessee. Additionally, school division liability insurance does not extend to cover the negligence of non-school users of the property. Therefore, it is advised that the user group arrange liability.

I understand that the Coronach School or the Borderland School Division assumes no responsibility for and may not be held liable for any loss or injury that may occur on the part of those using the school facilities covered under this agreement. I understand that any loss or damage of school property is the responsibility of the user group and shall be paid for by the user group.

I understand that if the School Use Regulations are not strictly adhered to, our privilege of using the classroom/gymnasium will be withdrawn immediately and may not be allowed in the future.

Authorized by:

Local School Advisory Committees

C-3

A. Regina Public School Division

LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 137 of The Education Act, and subject to the regulations of this Board, Local School Advisory Committees may be established under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education of the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan.

A Local School Advisory Committee should facilitate continuing communication and promote mutual understanding between the school and the community. The Advisory Committee will also provide a continuing organization through which the opinions, concerns and proposals of the electors may be brought to the attention of the Board of Education.

APPROVED: REGINA BOARD OF EDUCATION DECEMBER 21, 1978

REGULATIONS:

1. A Local School Advisory Association may be established within the attendance area(s) of any school(s) operating under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education of Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan.
2. Membership in a Local School Advisory Association shall be open to any public school elector resident in the prescribed school attendance area(s) and to the parents or lawful guardians of any pupils attending the school(s).
3. A petition to the Board to call an organizational meeting to discuss the formation of a Local School Advisory Association shall bear a minimum of 15 signatures of the persons designated in Regulation 2.
4. The Board of Education shall determine and be responsible for advertising the date, time and place of an organizational meeting of the Local School Advisory Association by means of a school newsletter, other appropriate Board publications, and such paid media advertising as it deems necessary.
5. The Board of Education shall make space available in a local school for an organizational meeting of a Local School Advisory Association and for subsequent meetings of the Association and of the Local School Advisory Committee.

6. A member of the Board of Education or a staff member delegated by the Board shall chair the organizational meeting of the Local School Advisory Association and shall inform those persons eligible for membership who are in attendance of the relevant Board bylaws, policies and regulations.
7. Those persons eligible for membership who are present at an organizational meeting may decide by majority vote to form a Local School Advisory Association and may elect not less than five (5) and not more than nine (9) persons eligible for membership from those present at the organizational meeting to be the Local School Advisory Committee of the Association. The number of members identified in Regulation 2 above shall be no less than 20% of the present enrolment(s) of the school(s) in the attendance area(s) concerned to constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the business of an organizational meeting.
8. An Association and its Advisory Committee shall be designated as:

The (local school name(s) or other appropriate designation) Advisory Association and The (same name as association) Local School Advisory Committee.
9. Upon request the Board shall provide a draft constitution (see Appendix A) which may be used as a guideline in the development of a constitution for a Local School Advisory Association.
10. A Local School Advisory Association shall submit a formal request for recognition by the Board of Education. The request shall include the following information:
 - a) proposed constitution (the constitution and subsequent amendments are subject to Board approval);
 - b) defined attendance area;
 - c) proposed organizational structure;
 - d) procedure for election of Local School Advisory Committee;
 - e) present membership and proposed procedure for maintaining minimum active membership;
 - f) membership fees to be charged, if any;
 - g) number of meetings to be held annually (by school year);
 - h) proposed publications, if any; and
 - i) general aims and objectives of the Association.
11. Upon recognition of a Local School Advisory Association, its Local School Advisory Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education and undertake such duties as the Board may approve.

Duties may include:

- a) discussion with the teaching staff of the school or schools involved in matters affecting the general educational welfare of the pupils;
 - b) studies of the goals of education;
 - c) promotion of school-community and parent-teacher communications;
 - d) consideration of questions pertaining to future planning and development of educational services in the attendance area or in the division;
 - e) participation in special projects, experiments and innovative practice which may be sponsored by or approved by the Board of Education;
 - f) suggestions relative to the selection and placement procedures used by the Board with respect to staff; and
 - g) recommendations with regard to community use of school facilities.
12. The principal(s) and staff members of the local school(s) shall be invited to attend all meetings of the Local School Advisory Association and the principal(s) of the local school(s) shall be invited to attend all meetings of the Local School Advisory Committee.
13. A Local School Advisory Committee may forward written submissions on behalf of the Association to the Board to the attention of the Chairman. The Board shall advise the Local School Advisory Committee of the disposition of each submission.
14. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, any two or more Local School Advisory Committees may arrange joint meetings for the purpose of discussing matters of mutual concern when authorized by their Associations.
15. Two or more Local School Advisory Associations may agree to unite and may petition the Board to approve the dissolution of the existing associations and Local School Advisory Committees and to recognize a new Local School Advisory Association to serve the combined attendance areas. Subject to the provision of the information prescribed in Regulation 10 respecting a proposed united Local School Advisory Association and Local School Advisory Committee, and upon approval of the proposed constitution by the Board, the united Local School Advisory Association and its Local School Advisory Committee are thereby established and the former Local School Advisory Associations and Local School Advisory Committees are thereby dissolved.

16. Should any Local School Advisory Association wish to disband at any future date, written notice shall be given to the Board and the procedure incorporated into its constitution for the disposal of assets shall be followed. All committees of an Association shall be disbanded at such time as the Association disbands.
17. Any Local School Advisory Association which is unable to achieve a quorum as defined in its constitution for two consecutive meetings shall be deemed to be dissolved. Written notice shall be given to the Board as outlined in Regulation 16 where possible. If none of the officers of the Association are available, the principal(s) of the school(s) involved shall be responsible for advising the Board the Association no longer exists.
18. Closure of any school shall automatically dissolve its Local School Advisory Association, and the Local School Advisory Committee holding office at the date of closure shall be deemed to constitute a Transitional Advisory Committee for a period of one year for the purpose of communicating to the Board the educational concerns of the pupils affected.
19. The Board of Education assumes no legal liability whatsoever for any unauthorized activities undertaken either by a Local School Advisory Association or a Local School Advisory Committee.
20. While the function of the Local School Advisory Associations and Committees as outlined are approved and encouraged by the Board of Education, it should be recognized that they are in no way intended to interfere with any individual elector's right to discuss matters of personal concern with the appropriate teacher, principal, administrator or Board member when the elector so chooses. These regulations, as may be amended or added to from time to time, and any regulations in substitution therefore, shall apply to every Local School Advisory Association and Local School Advisory Committee, and every Local School Advisory Association and every Local School Advisory Committee shall be subject thereto.

REGULATIONS EFFECTIVE: JULY 4, 1983-R

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Preamble

In order to facilitate continuing communication, to promote mutual understanding between the school and the community and to provide a continuing organization through which opinions, concerns and proposals of electors may be brought to the attention of the Board of Education of

the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan, hereinafter called "the Board", a Local School Advisory Association may be formed.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the School (Collegiate) Advisory Association.

Article II - Purpose of the Association

To act in an advisory capacity to the Board on matters pertaining to the education of the children enrolled in a (the) school(s) in the attendance area determined by Article IV, Section 1.

Article III - Powers

This association shall be constituted under the authority of the Board of Education of the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan, and shall possess no legislative powers except to provide regulations for the conduct of its own affairs.

Article IV - Membership

Section 1. All public school electors in the school attendance area(s) bounded by: (North, South, East, West).

Section 2. Parents and guardians of any pupils presently enrolled in School(s).

Article V - Meetings

Section 1. The Association shall have no fewer than three (3) public meetings, including the annual meeting, from September 1st in any year until June 30th of the next year.

Section 2. The Association shall have an annual meeting between September 1st and October 30th of each year.

Section 3. The Local School Advisory Committee shall meet, from time to time, at the call of the chairman and shall present a report of its activities at every public meeting of the association.

Article VI - Officers

Section 1. The Officers of the association shall be elected at the annual meeting and shall comprise of no less than five (5) and no more than nine (9) electors residing in the attendance area mentioned in Article IV.

- Section 2. The Officers shall be chairman, vice-chairman, secretary-treasurer and others as to be determined by the membership of the association.
- Section 3. The elected officers of the association shall constitute the Local School Advisory Committee of this association.
- Section 4. The majority of the members elected to hold office in this association must have a child presently enrolled in a (the) school(s) in the attendance area mentioned in Article IV, Section 1.
- Section 5. An officer of the association shall remain in office until the next annual meeting, unless the position is vacated by resignation or death of the member.
- Section 6. Vacancies must be filled by election at the next public meeting of the association.

Article VII - Duties of Local School Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee shall:

1. inform members of the association with respect to the schedule of its meetings and procedures for making submissions and representation(s) to the Committee;
2. convene at least three (3) public meetings of the association in each year;
3. at the request of any five (5) members of the association, convene a public meeting of the association;
4. co-operate with the Board, principals, teachers and other employees of the Board in the care, management and supervision of school property within the attendance area; and
5. advise the Board with respect to matters considered by the committee to be in the interest of education in the attendance area. These may include:
 - a) future planning and development of education services in the attendance area;
 - b) community use of school facilities in the attendance area;
 - c) promotion of school-community and parent-teacher communications;
 - d) participation in special project(s), experiments and innovative practices, sponsored or approved by the Board;

- e) consultation with the teaching staff of the school(s) in matters affecting the educational welfare of the pupils; and,
- f) suggestions relative to the selection and placement procedures used by the Board with respect to staff.

Article VIII - Voting

- Section 1. The election of all officers shall be by secret ballot. The candidate achieving a majority of votes shall be declared elected.
- Section 2. The quorum for any association meeting shall be members.
- Section 3. The quorum for any committee meeting shall be a majority of the members thereof.

Article IX - Resolutions

- Section 1. Any member of the association may propose resolutions at any meeting of the association.
- Section 2. Any resolution passed by this association or its committee may be forwarded in writing to the Board.
- Section 3. Any resolution mentioned in Section 2 of this Article that is forwarded to the Board must be accompanied with information as to where and when the resolution was discussed and the number of association members attending the meeting.

Article X - Amending the Constitution

- Section 1. Any member of the association may propose an amendment to this constitution by serving a notice of motion of this intent at one of the public meetings of the association.
- Section 2. An amendment, in order to be passed at a subsequent meeting of the association, must receive at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast.
- Section 3. All amendments approved by the association must be forwarded to the Board for ratification before they become effective.

Article XI - Publications

Article XII - Dissolution

- Section 1.** The association may be disestablished by resolution at any public meeting of the association.
- Section 2.** The association will be disestablished automatically if no quorum can be achieved for two consecutive meetings of the association.
- Section 3.** Closure of any school shall automatically dissolve its Local School Advisory Association, and the Local School Advisory Committee holding office at the date of closure shall be deemed to constitute a Transitional Advisory Committee for a period of one year, for the purpose of communicating to the Board the educational concerns of the pupils affected.
- Section 4.** Any assets of the association, at its dissolution, shall be forwarded to the Board, who shall use the funds to improve the educational program offered in the school(s) in the attendance area mentioned in Article IV, Section 1.

B. Swift Current School Division

BOARD OF EDUCATION

POLICY 2040

Swift Current School Division #94

Reg/Proc. X

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Legal Reference	Policy Title	Cross Reference
EA-137-142	LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Appendix V

In recognition of the need for local involvement in education, The Swift Current Board of Education encourages co-operation with and support of local parental groups representing school attendance areas. The Board of Education will provide for an organization through which opinions, concerns, and proposals of parents and electors may be brought to the attention of the Board.

In view of the above, the Board of Education approves the establishment of Local School Advisory Committees pursuant to the provisions made in *The Education Act* and subject to the following regulations.

Date of Board Approval:

June 9, 1980

Date of Revision:

Regulations and Administrative Procedures

Regulations

2040.1

Constitution

Local School Advisory Committees shall operate in accordance with a constitution as approved by the Board. Such a constitution shall include the parameters of function and purposes of the Committee.

2040.2

Local School Advisory Committees may be established within the attendance area of any school or a combination of schools operating within the School Division.

2040.3

Membership

Membership in the Local School Advisory Committee shall be open to any public school elector resident in the prescribed school attendance area(s) and to any parent or lawful guardians of any students attending the school(s). A duly elected school board member shall not sit on a Local School Advisory Committee.

2040.4

Organization

A petition to the Board calling for an organizational meeting to discuss the formation of a Local School Advisory Committee shall bear a minimum number of signatures of people eligible for membership under 200.3 equal to 30% of the enrollment of the school(s) in the attendance area(s) concerned.

Regulations and Administrative Procedures

2040.5

The Board of Education shall determine and shall be responsible for advertising the date, time and place of an organizational meeting of a Local School Advisory Committee.

2040.6

A member of the Board of Education shall chair the organizational meeting of the Local School Advisory Committee and shall inform those persons eligible for membership of the relevant board policies and regulations.

2040.7

Disbandment

Should any Local School Advisory Committee wish to disband at any future date written notice shall be given to the Board and all assets of the Committee shall be signed over to the operational school of the area and otherwise to the Board of Education.

2040.8

Dissolvement

Any Local School Advisory Committee which is unable to achieve a quorum as defined in its constitution for three consecutive meetings shall be deemed dissolved. Written notice shall be given as outlined under 2040.7. If no officers are available to write such a notice, the principal(s) of the school(s) involved shall forward such notice to the Board.

2040.9

Waiting Period

After disbandment, there shall be a waiting period of two years before the Board of Education will consider a petition for re-establishment of a Local School Advisory Committee.

2040.10

Liability

The Board of Education assumes no legal liability whatsoever for any unauthorized activities undertaken by the Local School Advisory Committee or its representatives.

2040.11

Model Constitution

Upon request, the Board shall provide a model constitution which may be used as a guideline in the development of a constitution for a Local School Advisory Committee. (See Appendix V)

2040.A

Request Submission

A formal request shall be submitted to the Board of Education for recognition and authorization to establish a Local School Advisory Committee. The request shall include:

1. the proposed constitution (the constitution and subsequent amendments are subject to Board approval),
2. attendance area concerned,
3. procedures for election of officers to the Local School Advisory Committee,
4. number of meetings to be held annually (by school year),
5. proposed publications, if any,

6. general aims and objectives of the organization.

2040.B

Advisory Capacity

Upon recognition, the Local School Advisory Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education and may undertake such duties as the Board may approve.

2040.C

Reporting

The Local School Advisory Committee shall report to the Board of Education at the next regular meeting of the Board following the meeting of the Local School Advisory Committee.

C. Swift Current School Division

Policy 2045

Swift Current School Division No. 94

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Legal Reference	Policy Title	Cross Reference
	Community Advisory Council	

The Board of Education recognizes that regular consultation with staff, parents, and the community at large will assist the Board in making educational decisions that are of greatest benefit to students and to society.

In view of the above, the Board of Education establishes the Community Advisory Council in accordance with the following regulations:

Date of Board Approval: June 26, 1995

Regulations and Administrative Procedures:

2045.1

Function

The council shall perform a general advisory role to the Board of Education, providing the Board, from time to time, its own corporate views and/or an indication of public opinion on educational issues which it may study at the request of the Board or on its own initiative.

More specifically, it shall serve these purposes:

1. To provide a forum broader than that offered by the membership of the board itself for the discussion of educational matters.
2. To study matters referred to it by the Board on which the Board wishes to have broader public reaction before making major decisions on establishing policy.
3. To provide the public with an additional channel of communication to the Board by discussing matters referred to it by the public and, after studying the matters, reporting this discussion to the Board of Education.

Membership

- i) The council shall consist of twenty-five (25) members. The membership shall include one (1) representative from each of the agencies and organizations listed below, and an additional number, to a maximum of twelve (12) to be recruited from among a wide representation of other community organizations. (The representatives may have a term of one year or two years, but may be reappointed by their agencies):
 - The Local School Advisory Committees for each school in the Division
 - The City of Swift Current
 - The Swift Current Chamber of Commerce
 - The Swift Current City Teachers' Association
 - The Administrators' and Coordinators' Group
 - The SEIU (School Caretakers' Union)
 - The Out-of-Scope Support Staff
 - The Swift Current Ministerial Association
 - The Comprehensive High School Parent Advisory Committee
 - The Cypress Hills Regional College
- ii) In September, the Director of Education shall extend an invitation to the various community organizations and employee groups to make nominations for membership to the Community Advisory Council.
- iii) Membership, in addition to the core representatives, shall be approved by the Board in accordance with the following provisions:
 - the organization shall be a Swift Current organization or agency
 - the organization shall be non-partisan and represent broad community interests
 - the reason(s) for desiring membership shall be submitted in writing
 - applications shall be assessed in relation to the purposes of the Advisory Council.
- iv) Members are expected to attend all meetings or send another representative of their organizations. If an organization fails to be represented for more than three (3) consecutive regular meetings without good reason, the executive may declare the position vacant and shall advise the organization accordingly.
- v) To provide direct communication with the Board, a Board member and a member of the administrative staff will be named to the

Council as ex-officio members with the privilege of discussion, but without the privilege of voting when decisions are being made.

2045.3

Officers

The council, at its initial fall meeting, shall elect its executive officers from its membership and the executive shall immediately assume office. The executive shall consist of President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Past President and Secretary.

2045.4

Meetings

The following criteria shall govern meetings of the council and of its executive:

- the council shall meet at least three (3) times per year.
- the executive may call a meeting at any time.
- a majority of the members of the council shall constitute a quorum.
- the council shall be disestablished if no quorum can be achieved for three (3) consecutive meetings of the organization.
- all decisions shall be determined by the majority vote of council members present.
- council meetings shall be open to the public who may participate in the discussion.
- upon a majority vote of the members, council shall meet in a closed session.
- from time to time, the council may invite participation by individuals who can provide information relating to specific issues.

2045.5

Communication with the Board and with the Public

The Council shall ensure that communication is facilitated with the Board and with the public in accordance with the following guidelines:

- the council may, on request, meet with the Board or the administrative staff at any time convenient to both parties concerned.
- following each meeting of the council, the secretary of the council shall provide the Director of Education with a report and/or minutes of the meeting to be duplicated for distribution to Board members and council members.

- the president of the Community Advisory Council or designate may attend all Board meetings, and shall have an opportunity to report at that time.
- all decisions made in closed session shall be approved by the council.
- the council executive shall submit an annual report at the Board's June meeting each year.
- at the beginning of each school year, the public shall be advised through the news media of the council's officers, membership and meeting dates, etc.
- the Advisory Council may announce its meeting dates, times, and main items of business through the available media.

2045.6

Finance

- i) The Director of Education shall provide such secretarial services as the council may require.
- ii) The Director of Education shall have the authority to approve expenses of the council up to \$100.00 per year. Expenditures beyond this amount shall require direct Board approval.

2045.7

Limitations of Authority

The council shall be able to review, advise and recommend. This council shall not speak for the Board nor replace or infringe upon the responsibilities of the Board of Education in its legislative, evaluative, judicial and administrative functions.

D. Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Policy

Legal Ref: EA 135

The Board of Education acknowledges that catholic education must be responsive to the needs of students, the responsibilities of parents and the mission of the Church. The Board supports the establishment of school advisory committees to enhance communication and to facilitate cooperation between staff and parents in the interests of students' learning. The Board accepts that it has legal responsibilities which cannot be abrogated or assigned and that all staff have professional responsibilities which it must be permitted to fulfil.

Regulations and Procedures

1. A Catholic School Advisory Committee (Committee) is to be organized in each school. Each group may select its own specific name.
2. The responsibilities of the Committee are:
 - to further Catholic education with respect to cooperation and communication among home, school and parish.
 - to collaborate on selected items and engage in consultation where appropriate.
 - to approve an annual budget of revenue and expenditures, and maintain appropriate financial records.
 - to consult with the principal with respect to school policies on student deportment and extracurricular activities.
 - to assist the school with student activities outside of school hours.
 - to assist the school staff in informing parents of educational developments in curriculum, instruction and assessment.
3. Membership on an elementary school Committee should include at least four parent/guardian representatives selected by parents/guardians from the parent body of the school, the school principal, one staff member and may include a representative of the Church community. Membership in a high school Committee should include at least four parent/guardian representatives selected by parents/guardians from the parent body of the school, the school principal, two staff members and two students selected by the students' representative council and may also include a representative of the Church community. These membership numbers are a minimum only. In order to foster parental involvement greater numbers are encouraged.

4. The Committee may use a wide variety of decision-making processes.
5. Each committee is to have a constitution that defines basic organization and accountability.
6. The establishment of the first Committee for a new school is the responsibility of the school principal in consultation with at least one staff member and at least four parent/guardian representatives from the school.

BOARD APPROVED: June 28, 1982
REVISED: June 9, 1998

Volunteers in Schools

C-4

Saskatoon (West) School Division No. 42

CODE: JF-1

Category: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Volunteers In Schools

The Saskatoon (West) Board of Education strongly believes that parent volunteers are a valuable resource to enhance programs and services in our schools. Parents and community members can make a strong contribution to schools in carrying out a wide range of activities within and outside the classroom. Principals and staff are encouraged to invite parents and community members to be involved and to make volunteers feel part of the school team. As well, parents and the community have a responsibility to make their interest in volunteering known to school staff.

Guidelines:

Parent volunteers should work under the guidance and supervision of the principal or designate in the school.

The principal has a responsibility to provide a thorough orientation for volunteers which should include information pertaining to their role, responsibilities, school regulations and the Code of Ethics for volunteers in the school.

Parent or community volunteers should receive appropriate direction and training for the tasks they have been asked to perform in the school.

Parent volunteers should exhibit an attitude of support for the school staff and school program.

When a parent or community volunteer is taking responsibility for a student or group of students, that parent or guardian should be informed and consent to that contact.

Volunteers will provide a confidential disclosure as part of the application for volunteering by responding to the following questions:

- have you ever held a teacher's certificate or qualification to teach that has been suspended or cancelled?
- have you ever been convicted of, or are you presently charged with any criminal offence of a sexual nature?

CODE: JF-2

Category: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- have you ever been convicted or are you presently charged with any criminal offence involving a minor?
- have you every had your driver's license suspended?

If a volunteer answers "yes" to any of the confidential disclosure questions, the principal will ask that volunteer to provide a Criminal Record Check.

On receipt of the Criminal Record Check, the principal, in consultation with the Local Board, will determine if the volunteer should be allowed to participate in the program.

Volunteers who are transporting students, should have a valid Saskatchewan operator's licence and should be free from driving convictions that would jeopardize the safety of students.

School are asked to develop a Code of Ethics for volunteers in their school which could include the following points:

- provide role expectations before volunteers start;
- work as part of the school team;
- accept constructive feedback from school staff regarding work performance and make appropriate changes;
- treat all students with respect and consideration and use a positive approach in all interactions with staff and students;
- hold confidential, all privileged information regarding students, school staff or school activities;
- be professional in dealing with staff and avoid gossip sessions about issues that may arise at the school;
- use proper channels when offering any criticism of staff or school;
- be prompt and observe school rules and procedures.

Date Approved: May 17, 2001

Dealing with Complaints and Grievances

C-5

A. Regina Catholic Schools

Policy and Protocols for Complaint or Grievance Resolution

Regina Catholic Schools - March, 1996

Policy and Procedures IEG entitled Student Complaints and Grievances is found in Appendix 2. It is suggested that the policy be revised as formulated here and encompass student and parent complaints.

A new policy is needed to address the conflict resolution process for parent associations. The policy would be applicable to all parent associations and would validate the school division's commitment to more formalized parent involvement.

Proposed Revision of Policy IEG	IEGA
Policy	Parent Association Complaints and Grievances

1. The Board expects all school administrators and staff to work collaboratively with the parent association of the school to successfully fulfil the mission and vision of the school division.
2. The Board expects that school administrators will accept and fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in The Education Act and in this policy manual, and imposed by the moral teachings of our Catholic church.
3. The Board expects that the parent association will work collaboratively with their school administrators and staff to attain jointly developed goals chosen to enhance the educational environment and opportunities for all students enrolled in their Catholic school.

Proposed Revision of Policy IEG	IEGA
Procedures	Parent Association Complaints and Grievances

1. If a parent association has a complaint or grievance, the executive of the association should discuss this with the principal of the school. It is anticipated that the vast majority of alleged grievances or complaints can be resolved at the school level.

2. If a parent association complaint is not successfully resolved at the school level, the executive of the parent association may wish to discuss the complaint with the appropriate Area Superintendent.
3. If in the view of the parent association executive, the grievance has not been resolved through the efforts of the Area Superintendent, the parent association may take the alleged grievance to the Director of Education.
4. In the event that the Director is not able to facilitate a resolution to the alleged grievance, the parent association may make representation to the Board.
5. Strategies of conflict resolution such as mediation and negotiation will be employed by those involved in the resolution of the dispute.

B. Saskatoon (East) School Division

Policy on dealing with Complaints and Grievances

Background

Although the Board of Education believes that the guidelines provided below as part of the policy are a reasonable approach to solving problems, it also recognizes that a parent or guardian has the right to communicate directly with the Division representative or the Board at any time at any stage of a conflict or difference of opinion. The Board also believes that a parent or student may choose an advocate to appear with him/her.

Policy

The Board of Education believes that disputes, complaints, or grievances should be dealt with openly and quickly according to the guidelines which follow.

Guidelines

1. A grievance should be addressed firstly to the person who is most closely associated with it. Consequently, if a parent or student has a concern with a teacher, the initial contact should be made with the teacher so that the problem can be aired and discussed.
2. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the results of the initial discussion, the principal should be contacted so that he/she may attempt to resolve the difficulty.
3. If the parent or student remains dissatisfied with the resolution of the concern, that person should contact the Director of Education so that he/she may attempt to resolve the concern.
4. When a dispute or conflict still exists, the complainant should make an appointment to meet with the Board of Education.

Communications

A. Regina Public School Division # 4

COMMUNICATIONS

Clear communication is vital for an effective school system. The Regina Board of Education is committed to open communication and the involvement of the public, parents, staff and pupils in its decision-making process.

APPROVED: REGINA BOARD OF EDUCATION DECEMBER 6, 1988-R

REGULATIONS:

A. Pertaining to communication with the public:

1. Pertinent information, other than of a confidential or sensitive nature, about topics of interest to the community may be provided to individuals and to the media.
2. The Board shall periodically publish a newsletter to provide information of interest to the public. Public response to specific questions outlined in these newsletters may be sought.
3. Special Committees may be established to seek the opinions of individuals or organizations.
4. Information for the public may be provided by brochures or displays explaining specific programs. Tours of schools may also be arranged for interested groups.
5. Media coverage of special school activities, such as concerts, stage shows, charitable fund raising programs or other events, must be approved by the principal. Arrangements may be made through the Communications Administrator.
7. Members of the public are encouraged to attend the public meetings of the Board.
7. Information about events of the previous calendar year shall be provided at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Report shall be available to the public. Agendas for Annual Meetings shall provide time for a discussion or question period involving members of the public.
8. Staff members should consult with their Superintendent if they are representing the school system in a speaking engagement or a

media interview. Organizations seeking speakers may contact the Communications Administrator for assistance.

B. Pertaining to communication with parents:

1. The Board encourages the formation of Parent-School Associations in every school.
2. Provision for the formation of Local School Advisory Committees is found in *The Education Act* and facilitated by Bylaw No. 1, Policy KCB. Such committees act in an advisory capacity to the local school and the Board.
3. Principals are expected to maintain close liaison with parents and guardians through regular school newsletters and meetings.

C. Pertaining to communication with the staff:

1. An information bulletin may be published on a regular basis and distributed to all employees.

D. Pertaining to formal submissions to the Board:

1. The procedure outlined in Bylaw No. 3 (Policy BBB), Section IX shall be followed when making submissions to the Board.
2. Proposals concerning curriculum or changes in policies may be presented to the Administrative Council Executive.
3. Members of the staff may forward submissions through regular administrative channels.
4. Pupils may make submissions through Student Representative Councils to the principal or follow the procedure referred to in Regulation D.1 above.

REGULATIONS EFFECTIVE: DECEMBER 6, 1988-R

B. Saskatoon Public School Division #13

Board Communication with the Community

The Board believes that it has a responsibility to communicate with the electors of the Saskatoon School Division and, therefore, in order that trustees have opportunities to receive views of electors, trustees will follow the procedures pursuant to the policy.

PROCEDURES:

With Public

In order to facilitate the objectives identified in this policy, the Board approves the following procedures:

- i. That the names of Board trustees be forwarded to every home and school association or the official parent group in a school district.
- ii. That the Board inform the above community organizations that it would be pleased to attend parent meetings. When a community desires a Board member to attend a meeting, the community should request this through the Chair of the Board or the Director of Education.
- iii. That, depending upon the nature of the meeting, the Board may also request an administrative official to attend the meeting with the trustee.
- iv. That the Board, through the Director of Education, advise home and school organizations that the Board welcomes invitations to hold Board meetings in the neighbourhood schools.
- v. That the Board announce Board meeting dates through the media and encourage school principals to inform the parents through the school newsletters.
- vi. That the Board communicate to the public its procedure for receiving the views and concerns of the public through delegations at Board meetings.
- vii. The Board believes that good communication, both internal and external, is vital to the goals of education as recognized by the Board. To promote effective communication with employees and the public, the Board authorizes the establishment of a communications office under the supervision of the Director of Education.

Home and School and Community Council

The Board believes that effective communication among the school, the home and the community assists in the promotion of the system's goals of education. To this end, the Board authorizes the Director of Education to encourage principals to establish in their communities an organization of teachers, parents and others interested in educational affairs, and to develop and maintain appropriate communication channels.

REGULATIONS:

Expectations:

Councils

Pursuant to the Board's policy statement, the Board establishes the following expectations for the functioning of Home and School and Community Councils:

- i. each elementary and secondary school should have a forum to promote dialogue on matters of general interest to parents and other members of the general public.
- ii. councils should have a constitution which identifies objectives, procedures for conducting business, and relationships with the school.
- iii. councils should be open to all electors residing in the school neighbourhood or community.
- iv. the council programs should reflect the interests of the membership and the needs of the school.
- v. councils may approve resolutions and submit them to the Board.

Functions of Councils

Some of the functions of councils will be:

- i. to stimulate by appropriate means participation by parents and the community generally in the improvement of educational services in the school.
- ii. to be sensitive to measures likely to promote more personal educational services in the school.
- iii. to make recommendations to the school administrators to ensure the best possible education for the students in the school.
- iv. to recommend to the school board proposals that may be considered for the improvement of the educational standards and opportunities in the school division.

Assumptions regarding Councils

Some basic assumptions regarding effective Home and School and Community Councils are:

- i. school administrators are key people in facilitating the work of councils.
- ii. council programs should vary in format to encourage the participation of its membership, eg. small group, large group.
- iii. most parents are primarily concerned with issues and decisions which relate directly to students' programs at the school level.
- iv. leadership inservice should be made available to members of the Home and School and Community Councils.
- v. the membership of councils require feedback on what has happened to their recommendations and proposals.
- vi. principals should encourage the school staff to be aware of the need to be receptive to parents who wish to influence decision making at the school.

PROCEDURES:

Principal's Responsibility

Principals shall initiate activities at the school level designed to promote communication between the school and the home, and the school and the community.

Methods

Some methods the principal may use to promote communication are:

- I. Home and School and Community Councils
- II. Adult volunteers
- III. News bulletins and newsletters
- IV. Parent teacher conferences
- V. School visitations
- VI. School displays
- VII. Information Handbook

V. Appendices

V. Appendices

Contents

Appendix A: Definitions V-1

Appendix B: References V-4

Appendix A: Definitions

Collaboration – collaboration among different people and organizations is the most sophisticated level of cooperative /partnership relationship. It is a more intensive and jointly-planned effort by people or organizations over a mutual concern that results in a mutually-desired outcome. It is a relationship in which the parties share common goals, mutual commitments, resources, decision making, and evaluation responsibilities. It involves a common goal with a clearly-articulated and shared commitment that is within the scope of the general goals of the collaborating agencies (Swan & Morgan, 1993).

Collaboration

Community – refers to a group of people bound together through mutual interest and a sense of shared destiny. The “boundaries” can be geographical (a neighbourhood, school, town, city or region) or non-geographical (such as an interest group dispersed across the province, workplace, business organization or cultural association). Communities are self-defining.

Community

Community Development – community development is an educational and motivational process that engages community members and organizations and empowers them to participate actively in improving the quality of their lives.

Community
Development

Cooperation – interagency cooperation is a process of working together informally to achieve the day-to-day goals of the organization. It represents a superficial level of agency interaction. Agencies are aware of one another and interact to provide general information, support or referrals.

Cooperation

Coordination – coordination is characterized by deliberate joint and often formalized relations for achieving shared or compatible goals. It involves establishing a common understanding of the services committed to and provided by each agency and by determining each agency's accountability and responsibility to specific groups. Unnecessary duplication is identified and eliminated and resources are shifted and

Coordination

reallocated to fill voids and gaps in the service system. Interagency coordination differs slightly from cooperation and represents a more sophisticated level of interagency interaction. It is a process of engaging in various efforts that alter or smooth the relationships of independent organizations, staff or resources. It involves establishing a common understanding of the services committed to and provided by each agency, and by determining each agency's accountability and its responsibility to specific groups.

Family

Family – families have many forms and it is the family relationships that are critical to a child's wellbeing. A family can be defined as any combination of two or more persons bound together by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibility for physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialization of children; social control of members; production, consumption and distribution of goods and services; and, affective nurturing.

Governance

Governance – institutional structures and processes for decision-making related to policy development, policy implementation, resource allocation, curriculum development and implementation, instructional planning and priority setting.

Integrated School-Linked Services

Integrated School-Linked Services – Integrated School-Linked Services initiatives use collaborative processes to forge partnerships among school divisions, schools, their communities, First Nation and Métis organizations, and provincial and community human service agencies. The purpose is to identify new approaches to planning and new configurations of service delivery that are more coordinated, comprehensive, and responsive in addressing the complex and diverse needs of at-risk students and families. Implementation of Integrated School-Linked Services requires significant change in existing systems and structures, as well as in attitudes and values. There is shared leadership, planning, decision making, resources, and evaluation (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994a).

Integrated School-Linked Services are intended to facilitate the participation of health, social services, justice, recreation and other service providers in participation with school personnel to address student needs that are beyond the professional mandate of educators. Their participation impacts on the role of the school, and the roles and relationships of school administrators and teachers as they share in the collaborative effort.

Parent

Parent – is used to refer to a child's significant caregiver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, foster parent or special or legal guardian.

Participation – the people involved in or impacted by an issue or initiative share in the planning and the outcome.

Participation

Partnership – partnership in this document is used to describe equitable working relationships, predicated on values of mutual respect and understanding and characterized at all levels by shared problem solving, shared decision-making powers, shared resources and shared accountability.

Partnership

Policy – a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions. A policy is a set of strategies designed to achieve a desired state of affairs (specific objectives). It is a concrete expression of values that involves the distribution of resources and power. A policy has three components: objectives, strategies and outcomes.

Policy

School^{PLUS} – On February 21, 2002, the Government of Saskatchewan released *Securing Saskatchewan's Future, Ensuring the Wellbeing and Educational Success of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth: Provincial Response to the Role of the School Task Force Final Report*. The Government strongly endorses the vision of School^{PLUS} proposed by the Task Force where schools have two functions – to educate children and youth and to support service delivery.

School^{PLUS}

School Level Organization – There are a variety of groups active at the school level in Saskatchewan, including:

School Level
Organization

- district boards of trustees;
- conseils d'écoles;
- local school advisory committees;
- parent advisory councils;
- parent-teacher associations;
- school councils; and,
- other local advisory groups.

These school level organizations have varying roles and responsibilities. Saskatchewan Learning respects the autonomy of boards of education, schools and parents to develop a structure appropriate to school needs.

Site-Based Management – an attempt to transform schools into communities where the appropriate people participate constructively in major decisions that affect them.

Site-Based
Management

Appendix B: References

Below is a list of references consulted during preparation of this handbook.

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